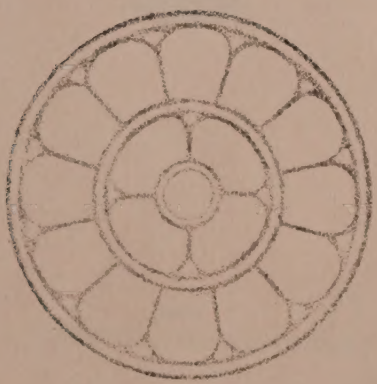
Vol. I. No. 1. February 1944

The ADVENT

A Quarterly Devoted to the Exposition of Sri Aurobindo's Vision of the Future



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THE ADVENT

A Quarterly
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Sri Aurobindo's Vision of the Future

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THE ADVENT

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Prayer for 1944

O Lord, the world implores Thee to prevent it from falling back always into the same stupidities.

Grant that the mistakes recognised may never be renewed.

Grant, lastly, that its actions may be the exact and sincere expression of its proclaimed ideals.

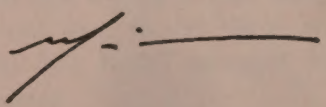
Sayings

" In the present condition of the world an absolute faithfulness to the Divine has become an indispensable need.

If you refuse to become a docile and surrendered servant of the Divine and the Master who manifests Him, it means that you will remain the slave of your egoism, your vanity, your presumptuous ambition and a toy in the hands of the Rakshasas who allure you with brilliant images in their attempt—not always unsuccessful —to possess you.

DOUBT IS NOT A SPORT TO INDULGE IN WITH IMPUNITY ; IT IS A POISON WHICH DROP BY DROP CORRODES THE SOUL.

It is only egoism that is shocked to find egoism in others."



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The Divine gives itself to those who give themselves without reserve and in all their parts to the Divine. For them the calm, the light, the power, the bliss, the freedom, the wideness, the heights of knowledge, the seas of Ananda. - - - *Sri Aurobindo.*

OURSELVES—AN APOLOGY

The "Advent" proposes to place Sri Aurobindo's vision of the future before aspiring humanity. The words of the Master himself are there, no doubt, available to all who seek to know, and one must remember that it is always better to go to the original source for light and guidance than run the risk of a wrong lead under a lesser luminary or a borrowed inspiration. Sri Aurobindo has dealt extensively with the matter he has chosen as his field of concern and has viewed and reviewed it from many sides and angles; it would almost look as if he was anxious to give no room for future commentators and note-makers to misinterpret or obfuscate his meaning and intention.

All this is perhaps true and we must always keep it well in view. And yet our attempt may not be quite superfluous. Our candle-light is not meant to replace the Sun, nor has it even the pretension to show the way to the Sun; it is more like a taper kindled from our heart of adoration and gratitude, an incense burning and offering itself, rendering back to the Source what it received from there.

Our purpose, then, will be served if we can touch kindred souls and rouse in them—or help or be an occasion to rouse in them —the aspiration which moves us. Our task will be to bear testimony, in our way, to the Truth and Life that has been revealed by the Master.

Sri Aurobindo's vision enrings the entire domain of human preoccupations; it embraces and

relumes all truths that secretly build and inspire man's integral being—his mental and vital and even physical, his individual as well as collective formations. So one line of our interest will lie in the direction of scanning and understanding human movements —spiritual, intellectual, social, literary or scientific—in the light Sri Aurobindo has shed upon them. Naturally, it is the principles and forces behind external formulations that will principally, if not wholly, engage our attention; for it is the principles and forces that guide and control our actual life that have to be fundamentally changed—transmuted—if there is to be a fundamental change in the mode of our earthly living.

To be able to create a living interest in the Master's Revelation about these abiding truths that determine human destinies, to call together some people who look for the Saviour Grace but do not know where to find it, to turn a few hearts and minds to something that would allay all their questionings—well, that is ample achievement and we ask for no more.

THE GOLDEN AGE—THE AGE OF TRUTH

The first of August last was heralded by a good many prophets in India as a day of cataclysm (*pralaya*) and a day of New Creation. The prophecy, it appears, dates back to the Bhagavata and the Vishnu Purana which stated quite plainly and intelligently—unlike the prophetic riddles of Nostradamus—the solid astrological grounds. Booklets and pamphlets were widely circulated warning men to prepare for the Doomsday, when the sheep will be separated from the goat, the godly from the sinful and these will be chastised and those rewarded. Some spoke of the apparition of *kalki* galloping on his white horse, reeking with blood, driving out the old world, dragging in the new. Simple-minded folk woke on the fateful morning and waited trembling..... but the day wore on and passed quietly as the day before, as all the days.

In Europe, a similar hope and catastrophe were announced by Christian devouts to await the world in the year 1,000 A.D.—here in India today, it is to be noted, we are in the Vikram Era 2,000. Then too a kingdom of heaven upon earth was promised and the end of a world with its cup of sin full to the brim. As today, so in that year too nothing happened, the inexorable march of Nature continued as usual unperturbed.

Well, nothing more than the merest common sense is needed to tell the simple truth that man

must change first inwardly before a real change can come in the outside world; the more radical a change we expect or demand in terrestrial circumstances, the more radical a change there should be in man's character and nature. If there is to be a catastrophe and revolution outside in life, there must occur beforehand a similar thing in his being and consciousness. An active volcano means a pre-existent seething fire in the bowels of the earth. Verily, verily the kingdom of heaven is within.

It is the complex of wish-fulfilment in man that makes him hungry for results which he is averse to prepare with pains and efforts. That is mere day dreaming. Not in that way do things happen in the world. The world will be cleared of demons if we individually clear ourselves of the demons that we harbour within us; human society can be a temple of truth, if each member rids himself of falsehood and builds himself with truth and nothing but truth. Earth can be made a perfect play of the Divine if and when the embodied souls embody the Divine. Not before.

WHAT IS TRUTH?

Consistency, they say, is the bugbear of great minds. But, according to some philosophers, it is the soul and substance of Truth, which is defined as nothing more and nothing less than self-consistency. Whatever is self-consistent, whatever is free from self-contradiction is truth. That is the criterion par excellence of truth. Falsehood is that which bears in itself self-contradiction. Even the other day an eminent Indian leader stated that "Truth is the unseveral oneness of our word, thought and deed."* We have doubts about this definition and criterion. This may be, at the most, truthfulness, but not truth. A falsehood can be self-consistent throughout. We do not know if there is a shred of self-contradiction in Hitler's mental make-up: it appears to be a single seamless stream-lined consistency and yet its name is falsehood.

We consider truth to be nothing else than the soul in things, it is the Spirit, the divine element, the Divine Himself secreted in things. There is no other truth, no other criterion of truth. If one lives in his soul, finds the Divine—the real Divine—and is identified with it, then only can one be said to have possessed the

* 'The Social Welfare', August 20, 1943.

truth. The anti-divine or the undivine may be quite self-consistent, but because it is not the Divine, because it has severed itself from the Divine, it has fallen from the truth and has become falsehood.

It can be asked, however, does not the Divine mean a wholly self-consistent reality, as he is the supreme harmony and identity? Anything less, anything divergent, must perforce carry within itself some kind of inconsistency. An Asura, a Titan, however consistently perverse, cannot altogether eliminate the element of falsehood. This is a metaphysical position which may be theoretically true: but, it must be remembered that the Divine is an infinite unity and holds in himself, although harmonising and unifying them all, multiple contradictorinesses; a single-track self-consistency—A is A and A is not-B—cannot be the logic of the Infinite Truth, it can very well be the logic of Falsehood.

RELIGION *vs.* ETHICS

Quite a heated controversy has been raging in the pages of the "New Statesman and Nation" of London among partisans of two schools upholding one or the other of these two creeds. The "Christian School" led by the Rector of Dartington pronounces most vehemently that ethics, mere ethics is truncated Christianity and without the life-breath of the religion, morality is sure to break up and fall to pieces. Devoid of the religious sense, ethics stands on a foundation of sand. What truly makes man moral is faith in God, what has made Europe admit moral values is Christianity, belief in the Revelation of Christ. The free-thinkers—socialists and modernists generally—aver that religion and morality are quite different things—religion may be immoral and morality irreligious. Morality, according to this school, is the result of man's growth in civilisation; it has developed as man has developed through his varied experiences and experiments in life and society. One may have no faith in religion, no belief in Christ, still one can be a perfectly ethical man. The religionists answer that the ethicist can say so only because he is banking upon the capital built up by religion in the past. It was religion that started civilising man, it is man's discovery of God that first laid the basis of a moral life, and this moral life progresses and is strengthened and organised as man progresses in his religious consciousness. At the present stage of man's evolution, in the world of today, you can lop off

the religious element without immediately destroying its offshoot, *viz.*, morality, for it will survive and go on for some time through the momentum given to it, but its life would soon fizzle out, and unless religion comes back and re-moralises man, he will surely revert to the animal stage. Naturally the pure ethicists will not admit such a conclusion. They would stick to their view of an independent origin and functioning of the ethical sense in man.

We say that both religion and ethics are the expression of a certain status of being, of a certain level and mode of consciousness in man. Both have developed *pari passu* through the pressure of a developing consciousness. But both have limitations.

All values have their absolutes only in the truth of the Spirit, in the Divine Consciousness. The values of the mental order are relative and variable; they are of interest as intermediate terms of a growing consciousness. Religious tenets and ethical principles both belong to this lesser category.

SEX AND SPIRITUALITY

Our readers will come across the problem of sex and spirituality raised in one of our reviews in this issue. A few words seem necessary to make our position definite and clear in this matter. It is to be noted, however, that this is largely a modern problem, the problem, that is to say of how to mix or reconcile or harmonise the two elements in human nature. For, the ancient or traditional disciplines in spirituality never left a doubt on the point, they all eschewed and banned sex, declaring that it is the negation of spirituality—*brahmacharya*, continence or chastity, the very basis of spirituality, is nothing but the annulment and elimination of sex. The Vedantic disciplines, including the Buddhistic, were categorical on the subject and went so far as to deny, at least at the outset and in principle, the right of spiritual endeavour and achievement to women. And when women were, in fact, admitted into the spiritual domain, they were segregated from men; it was considered absolutely necessary for the spiritual welfare of both that they should not meet or see each other. The bias was so strong that spiritual women were looked upon as exceptional and uncommon beings; even so it was doubted whether they could reach the very highest status in spirituality. It was Tantricism and Vaishnavism that gave an honoured place to women and allowed meeting and association between

men and women in the spiritual field.

In some esoteric Tantrik and Vaishnava disciplines a woman had to be chosen as an indispensable associate or companion—counterpart in sadhana, *uttara-sadhika*. But the meaning and intention was never ambiguous: it was a way, a powerful and effective way, according to the practisers, of controlling and mastering the sex impulse and sex instinct. The Vedantic path, it was pointed out, avoided the problem: they cut the Gordian knot, as it were; for they ran away from life and its fundamental difficulties, took to the way of absolute withdrawal from the world into the Beyond. Their remedy for the ills of life was the suppression of life itself. The Tantrik, on the other hand, sought to experience the spiritual in Prakriti, in the dynamic movements of life: he faced life, was in it, although he was not of it. In view of this end it would not have served his purpose to cut away the sexual knot: he proposed to unravel it, make it straight and clean. His object was not to be mastered by the sex dynamism but to be master of it, to sublimate and transmute it into a purer energy at the service of spiritual experience and spiritual life. The sex impulse being the strongest force in human nature, when transmuted, can make for the strongest spiritual realisation and achievement. So the Sahajiya adept in his mystic symbolism says, "Then indeed you become the marvellous conjuror when you know how to make the frog dance in the very fangs of the viper."

One can now easily understand the particular stress that was laid by certain sects upon extra-marital companionship *(parakīya)* in spiritual practice. The sexual force is peculiarly strong and violent in such a case and evidently the view was that the greater the force the greater the merit in conquering it. A greater force on a lower level of consciousness when conquered and transmuted yield a corresponding greater force on the higher level. It is true that the method is full of peril and ends very often in disaster; but it is a method that has been cultivated by some heroic souls. It is also true however that the same or even more absolute result—that is to say, the sublimation and transmutation of sex energy—can be achieved by other means less dramatic but safer and surer.

The theory of a companion soul—an alter ego—necessary in the spiritual journey is only the imposition of a truth of the lower consciousness upon the higher consciousness, an illegitimate carrying over of a truth of the

desire-soul in social life into the domain of pure spiritual truths. But it is well-known among spiritual seekers that in heaven there is no marriage nor giving in marriage. Such a transference not only falsifies the spiritual truth but deludes the aspirant and leads him to perdition.

The Vaishnava conception, as has been pointed out by our reviewer, that there is only one Man, namely, Krishna, and that all human souls are feminine, is nearer the truth. It is not that there cannot be affinity among souls, among human beings living the spiritual life, but this is not an exclusive relation between two and the sex notion does not at all enter into it: the same affinity can exist between persons of the same sex. This affinity is entirely based upon unity in the Divine Will and Consciousness: it is free from the sense of sex, as it is free from the sense of age difference; so long as there is a shadow of such differentiation, the divine affinity cannot express itself or have its play.

It may be asked what then is the meaning in the creation of these two types of beings, thus sexually differentiated? Well, whatever may have been the use to which it was put on the lower levels, in the spiritual consciousness the truth that this differentiation represents is this that the two are dual modes of expression of the Divine Personality. The component elements that make up the two types are the same and the same divine inflatus moves both, only there is a difference in stress and rhythm: this difference is necessary for a richness, variety and colourful harmony in the execution of the Divine Plan.

To speak again to the world the eternal word under a new form adapted to its present mentality.

It will be the synthesis of all human knowledge.

Collectively, to establish an ideal society in a propitious spot for the flowering of the new race, the race of the Sons of God.

—*Words of the Mother.*

SRI AUROBINDO

ON THE WAR

[Sri Aurobindo has made known to the public his standpoint with regard to the present war. He is for unconditional and unreserved help—an all-out help to the Allies whose cause, according to him, is humanity's and also India's cause. The present extracts from a private letter written some time ago in answer to certain doubts and misgivings will further elucidate his position.]

What we say is not that the Allies have not done wrong things, but that they stand on the side of the evolutionary forces. I have not said that at random, but on what to me are clear grounds of fact. What you speak of is the dark side. All nations and governments have been that in their dealings with each other,—at least all who had the strength and got the chance. I hope you are not expecting me to believe that there are or have been virtuous governments and unselfish and sinless peoples? But there is the other side also. You are condemning the Allies on grounds that people in the past would have stared at, on the basis of modern ideals of international conduct; looked at like that all have black records. But who created these ideals or did most to create them (liberty, democracy, equality, international justice and the rest)? Well, America, France, England —the present Allied nations. They have all been imperialistic and still bear the burden of their past, but they have also deliberately spread these ideals and spread too the institutions which try to embody them. Whatever the relative worth of these things—they have been a stage, even if a still imperfect stage of the forward evolution. (What about the others? Hitler, for example, says it is a crime to educate the coloured peoples, they must be kept as serfs and labourers.) England has helped certain nations to be free without seeking any personal gain; she has also conceded independence to Egypt and Eire after a struggle, to Iraq without a struggle. She has been moving away steadily, if slowly, from imperialism towards cooperation; the British commonwealth of England and the Dominions is something unique and unprecedented, a beginning of new things in that direction;

she is moving in idea towards a world-union of some kind in which aggression is to be made impossible ; her new generation has no longer the old firm belief in mission and empire ; she has offered India Dominion independence—or even sheer isolated independence, if she wants that,--after the war, with an agreed free constitution to be chosen by Indians themselves . . . . All that is what I call evolution in the right direction—however slow and imperfect and hesitating it may still be. As for America she has forsworn her past imperialistic policies in regard to Central and South America, she has conceded independence to Cuba and the Phillippines . . . Is there a similar trend on the side of the Axis ? One has to look at things on all sides, to see them steadily and whole. Once again, it is the forces working behind that I have to look at, I don't want to go blind among surface details. The future has to be safeguarded ; only then can present troubles and contradictions have a chance to be solved and eliminated . . . .

***

For us the question does not arise. We made it plain in a letter which has been made public that we did not consider the war as a fight between nations and governments (still less between good people and bad people) but between two forces, the Divine and the Asuric. What we have to see is on which side men and nations put themselves ; if they put themselves on the right side, they at once make themselves instruments of the Divine purpose in spite of all defects, errors, wrong movements and actions which are common to human nature and all human collectivities. The victory of one side (the Allies) would keep the path open for the evolutionary forces : the victory of the other side would drag back humanity, degrade it horribly and might lead even, at the worst, to its eventual failure as a race, as others in the past evolution failed and perished. That is the whole question and all other considerations are either irrelevant or of a minor importance. The Allies at least have stood for human values, though they may often act against their own best ideals (human beings always do that) ; Hitler stands for diabolical values or for human values exaggerated in the wrong way until they become diabolical (*e.g.* the virtues of the Herrenvolk, the master race). That does not make the English or Americans nations of spotless angels nor the Germans a wicked and sinful race, but as an indicator it has a primary importance.....

***

The Kurukshetra example is not to be taken as an exact parallel but rather as a traditional instance of the war between two world-forces in which the side favoured by the Divine triumphed, because the leaders made themselves his instruments. It is not to be envisaged as a battle between virtue and wickedness, the good and the evil men. After all, were even the Pandavas virtuous without defect, quite unselfish and without passions?.....

Were not the Pandavas fighting to establish their own claims and interests—just and right, no doubt, but still personal claim and self-interest? Theirs was a righteous battle, *dharmya yuddha*, but it was for right and justice, in their own case. And if imperialism, empire-building by armed force, is under all circumstances a wickedness, then the Pandavas are tinted with that brush, for they used their victory to establish their empire continued after them by Parikshit and Janamejaya. Could not modern humanism and pacifism make it a reproach against the Pandavas that these virtuous men (including Krishna) brought about a huge slaughter that they might become supreme rulers over all the numerous free and independent peoples of India? That would be the result of weighing old happenings in the scales of modern ideals. As a matter of fact such an empire was a step in the right direction then, just as a world-union of free peoples would be a step in the right direction now,—in both cases the right consequences of a terrific slaughter.....

We should remember that conquest and rule over subject peoples were not regarded as wrong either in ancient or mediaeval or quite recent times but as something great and glorious; men did not see any special wickedness in conquerors or conquering nations. Just government of subject peoples was envisaged but nothing more—exploitation was not excluded. The modern ideas on the subject, the right of all to liberty, both individuals and nations, the immorality of conquest and empire, or such compromises as the British idea of training subject races for democratic freedom, are new values, an evolutionary movement; this is a new Dharma which has only begun slowly and initially to influence practice,—an infant Dharma which would have been throttled for good if Hitler succeeded in his "Avataric" mission and established his new "religion" over all the earth. Subject-nations naturally accept the new Dharma and severely criticise the old imperialisms; it is to be hoped

that they will practise what they now preach when they themselves become strong and rich and powerful. But the best will be if a new world-order evolves, even if at first stumblingly or incompletely, which will make the old things impossible—a difficult task, but not absolutely impossible.

The Divine takes men as they are and uses men as His instruments even if they are not flawless in virtue, angelic, holy and pure. If they are of good will, if, to use the Biblical phrase, they are on the Lord's side, that is enough for the work to be done. Even if I knew that the Allies would misuse their victory or bungle the peace or partially at least spoil the opportunities open to the human world by that victory, I would still put my force behind them. At any rate things could not be one-hundredth part as bad as they would be under Hitler. The ways of the Lord would still be open—to keep them open is what matters. Let us stick to the real, the central fact, the need to remove the peril of black servitude and revived barbarism threatening India and the world, and leave for a later time all side-issues and minor issues or hypothetical problems that would cloud the one all-important tragic issue before us.

Without faith nothing decisive can be achieved either in this world or for possession of the world above, and it is only by laying hold of some sure basis and positive support that man can attain any measure of terrestrial or celestial success and satisfaction and happiness; the merely sceptical mind loses itself in the void. But still in the lower knowledge doubt and scepticism have their temporary uses; in the higher they are stumbling blocks: for there the whole secret is not the balancing of truth and error, but a constantly progressing realisation of revealed truth.....Whatever incompleteness there is in the knowledge attained, it must be got rid of, not by questioning in its roots what has been already realised, but by proceeding to further and more complete realisation through a deeper, higher and wider living in the Spirit. And what is not yet realised must be prepared for by faith, not by sceptical questioning, because this truth is one which the intellect cannot give and which is indeed often quite opposed to the ideas in which the reasoning and logical mind gets entangled: it is not a truth which has to be proved, but a truth which has to be lived inwardly, a greater reality into which we have to grow.

—*Essays on the Gita: First Series.*

A DIALOGUE—FAITH AND REASON

He: Discussion is essential and must not be excluded.

I: Viewed in the true light, it has not a great place, if any at all, in the sadhana. At best, it may help in removing the confusion in the mind; even for that I will truly depend upon my faith in the higher light.

He: Intellectual activity, discussion, study etc. by degrees make the blind faith luminous which finally ceases to be something mysterious and becomes explicable.

I: Faith, like Knowledge, Bliss etc., is not of this world, though may be found here also. It is a secret power in us, accessible to us, that puts our being in communication with the higher consciousness. What is sought by discussion and study and hardly ever attained is received in fact with the help of faith.

Faith recedes when mind and intellect are too active.

* * *

He: If I am drawn towards a particular ideal and sadhana, it is because its philosophy and rationale give a complete satisfaction to my mind and intellect.

I: It may be so in your case. But, in general, what happens is this that one is attracted to a path, to a person, one hitches his wagon to a star, one does not know exactly why, simply because it gives him satisfaction —not merely to his mind and intellect but to his heart and soul, he cannot do otherwise. First attraction, then rationalisation.

Well, what made Vivekananda tie his fate to the "whims of a crazy Brahmin", as he used to say at times? Is it Ramakrishna's philosophy or metaphysics?

He: Vivekananda was satisfied, because his questionings were laid at rest, all his problems solved by this single phrase, "I have seen God and I see Him much more concretely than I see your physical body."

I: Exactly so; but that is not philosophy or intellectual reasoning. There were a lot of doubters and scoffers, so-called intellectualists, who would not or could not be convinced or converted by Ramakrishna. Their small petty doubtings and questionings remained rooted as ever; but a giant intellect made its submission or was stunned to submission, as it were, not through discussion and reasoning, but through admiration and adoration.

He: Then you think that the mind and the intellect are a heap of rubbish fit only to be thrown out into the dustbin? They are of no use at all?

I: They have a use, only when you have gone beyond them, when you have illumined them with a light that is not theirs.

—*A*

BONNE ANNEE...1944

Bonne annee, Mother sweet! another year
Has sprung up from the depth of the Unknown,
Thy puissant blessings fall on its life-sphere,
Its herald an approach of luminous Dawn.

Bonne annee, Mother great! let this year be
A bright prelude to thy total victory.

Bonne annee, bonne annee, let us all sing,
For the vast waste of dead years lies behind,
Mother of peace, Mother of love, oh bring
Thy heaven's splendour into our desert-mind.

Mother, let us responding to thy call
Rise to thy height like a pure incense-flame;
In our heart's sleepless shrine let us instal
The burning Presence of thy magic Name.

From Time and its giant ravage make us free
That we may live in thy eternal light
Where all things throb with thy felicity
And a moon-edged glory is the soul of Night.

Thou art the rapturous vision we behold,
God's white redemption bearing this frail earth,
As if a radiant mass of heaven's gold
Towards the ecstasy of immortal Birth.

Bonne annee, Mother great! let this year be
A bright prelude to thy total victory.

—*Nirodbaran.*

THE NEW ADVENT

A wide expanse of liquid grey ...a shimmer
On the horizon of some amber clouds....
Between the dusk-enveloped twigs a glimmer
Of an eager planet wrestling with the shrouds

Woven by Nature on the looms of eve ..
The supine sea-scape hums a monotone
Of apathy that would not even receive
The joy of phosphorescence as its own.

A sudden moon-rise, haloed with lambent gold....
A sudden soughing of the boughs...slow heaves
Of darkling waters to the manifold
Loveliness rained by dwindling light on leaves

And flowers and creepers pining for delight—
Then the answer rings out to the ancient cry
Of loneliness and Beauty quells the blight
Of shadows, sounding lunar conchs on high.

A sudden victory, yet how swift, complete
And wondrous !—it would seem an angel train
Sieged in a mood of magic, passing sweet :
A new Advent through night when daytides wane !

A moment mere, an adventitious gleam,
A fleeting glance aslant of the infant moon,
A whiff from the heights and lo, doom yields to dream !
A star's rebirth when olden rushlights swoon !

Would it not be even so with soul's sunrise
(On the crest of Life's clouds, pallid, commonplace)
Spurring our listlessness to the enterprise
Miraculous of a new-born consciousness

Of diamond glinting out from the heart of cinder,
Of sleep ensouling slumbers girt by gloom,
Of the bliss incredible in all-surrender
To the All who builds Love's pantheons on hate's tomb !

—Dilip Kumar Roy.

THY WILL BE DONE

Let but Thy will be done,
Mine lost in Thine,
Embodied Ever-Sun
Of Truth divine.

Let but Thy living Ray
Nectared, moon-cool,
Bring here God's golden day
O'er earth to rule.

Let the night transformed become
An altar vast,
Thy immortal sun-fire's home,
O Glory amassed!

Let gods of heavens high
And Titans great
Accept submissively
Thy will, their fate,

And help Thy wonder-plan
Becomingly
To make a god of man
And life death-free,

A field where harmonies
Divine would play,
And Love's profundities
Bloom bright as May.

Let falsehood's force forsake
Its night-mare game,
And all to Thy Truth-Law take
And brightly claim

Thy Love's down-pouring Grace,
And bathed therein
See Thy dawn's radiant face,
Thy rose divine;

And delivered thus from strife
And struggle dark,
Upon a Truth-born life
Enrapt embark

And reach the diamond haven
That lies at Thy feet,
Home of the ecstasies seven,
Union complete.

—*Punjalal.*

THE CREATIVE VISION OF SRI AUROBINDO

Sri Aurobindo has seen in his unique Yogic vision that humanity is proceeding towards a divine realisation on the earth through a progressive evolution. That realisation will come by the power of the divine Truth, and that Truth will itself determine the nature of its own manifestation. It is not possible to give an exact account of that realisation beforehand. Still whatever general ideas the human intelligence can form about it have been expressed by Sri Aurobindo in his books, especially in his *magnum opus*, The Life Divine. And he is not content with giving a highly illuminating and inspiring philosophical account of the thing; he has ascertained by Yogic means what man will actually have to do in order to attain the goal and has been preparing the conditions under which the Truth can manifest. That is the real work in which Sri Aurobindo is at present engaged; it cannot be expected that until the ideal he has foreseen takes a concrete shape, people in general will be able to understand its significance or proceed eagerly to accept or welcome it. Still there are people all over the world today who are awakening to this ideal of future realisation and are feeling the inner call to undertake the requisite discipline and sadhana. This journal is started with the object of giving them some help in understanding the ideal and the path of Sri Aurobindo.

The ideal which the modern mind has understood very well is the rationalisation of life, "an ideal material organisation of civilisation and comfort, the use of reason and science and education for the generalisation of a utilitarian rationality which will make the individual a perfected social being in a perfected economic society." This rationalistic ideal, however, is not so modern as it is supposed to be. Rousseau and other rationalists of the eighteenth century in Europe brought about the French Revolution following this very ideal; but whatever might have been its other results, it certainly did not lead to the formation of an ideal order of society. The later attempt of the Marxists on the same lines has led no doubt to a new order of social organisation in Russia, but there has not been any fundamental change or improvement in the condition of men; in some important respects, as in the matter of individual freedom, there has been a definite deterioration; and Soviet Russia is already being compelled to give up one by one the fundamental tenets of Marxism, even its opposition to religion and spirituality. In ancient times, essentially the same rationalistic ideal was followed by the Greeks—the ideal of perfecting human life and human society with the help of the intellect. But ancient India could not accept this ideal as the highest for mankind. The ideal of India was very well expressed in the famous words of Maitreyi, "What shall I do with anything that will not lead me to Immortality?" Human nature is many-sided and very complex; man has a body, a vital, a mind and each of these has its own claims and needs. Only the barbarian can remain satisfied with the well-being of

the body and the satisfaction of vital desires; man is chiefly a mental being and his mind erects the ideals of the True, the Good, the Beautiful—man's humanity really consists in the pursuit of these ideals for their own sake. But it is found that these mental ideals do not accord with the claims and demands of the body and the life of man; again the conflict between his body and his life also is considerable. That is really why human life is full of so many conflicts and contradictions; through the ages, all attempts of man to erect an ideal order of society have broken down again and again on account of these inherent conflicts in human nature. The desire for possession, domination, exploitation is inherent in the vital nature of man, and even the most satisfactory economic condition that any social scheme can bring about will not appease these hungers in man; even the very peace and security prevailing in the world will be found monotonous and boring and the vital nature will seek for new adventures leading to social conflicts and international wars. The intellectual reason of man has not the power to establish a harmony among these discordant elements and lead them to their true fulfilment; that can be done only by a spiritual consciousness which is greater and higher than the mind, *yo buddheh paratastu sah*:

"Mind and life themselves cannot grow into their fullness except by the opening up of the larger and greater consciousness to which mind only approaches. Such a larger and greater consciousness is the spiritual, for the spiritual consciousness is not only higher than the rest but more embracing. Universal as well as transcendent, it can take up mind and life into its light and give them the true and utmost realisation of all for which they are seeking; for it has a greater instrumentality of knowledge, a fountain of deeper power and will, an unlimited reach and intensity of love and joy and beauty. These are the things for which our mind, life and body are seeking, knowledge, power and joy, and to reject that by which all these arrive at their utmost plenitude is to shut them out from their own highest consummation." (*The Life Divine*, Vol. II, p. 586).

Intellectual knowledge and mental will are not all the instruments of our consciousness and energy; we have other powers which it is the aim of Nature in us to discover and actualise.

"*All* man's age-long effort, his action, society, art, ethics, science, religion, all the manifold activities by which he expresses and increases his mental, vital, physical, spiritual existence, are episodes in the vast drama of this endeavour of nature and have behind their limited apparent aims no other true sense or foundation. For the individual to arrive at the divine universality and supreme infinity, live in it, possess it, to be, know, feel and express that alone in all his being, consciousness, energy, delight of being is what the ancient seers of the Veda meant by the knowledge; that was the immortality which they set before man as his divine culmination." (*L.D.* Vol. II, p. 597).

The rationalists of modern Europe wanted to eliminate religion from life as being an obstacle to the progress of humanity. They erected a rationalistic religion of humanity, the service of man as man, the observance of moral and

social rules conducive to the welfare of human life on the earth; they made it a substitute for traditional religion, and it must be admitted that this has done much good to mankind. But this very rationalistic attitude brought about a subjective chaos, and specially after the last devastating European war,

> "all received values were overthrown and all firm ground seemed to disappear from its social organisation, its conduct and its culture."

That arch high-brow of Modernism, Aldous Huxley, brought forward a thesis in his writings that whatever a man does, good or bad, virtuous or sinful, can be defended by reason, and a philosophical system can be erected in its support. A practical illustration is found in Hitler's *Mein Kamf* which is a direct negation of all the ideals of humanism erected into a philosophical system. A society which rejects spiritual values cannot bring forth a better and higher order of human life simply by giving encouragement to Science and Art in the name of culture; in such a society Science will be used as a means of fulfilling the so-called natural and evolutionary laws such as "the survival of the fittest" and "the rule of the Herrenvolk," and Art will be made to pamper to the lowest passions in man thus giving a new force and ascendance to his lower nature and that will really be an evolutionary retrogression.

> "This conscious stress on the material and economic life was in fact a civilised reversion to the first state of man, his early barbaric state and its preoccupation with life and matter, a spiritual retrogression with the resources of the mind of a developed humanity and a fully evolved Science at his disposal. As an element in the total complexity of human life this stress on a perfected economic and material existence has its place in the whole: as a sole or predominant stress it is for humanity itself, for the evolution itself full of danger." (*L.D.* 1158).

Today the world has arrived at a great crisis. It has to be decided whether man with all his scientific knowledge and power would go back to the barbaric condition or would find and follow the true path of progress and development. If at this crucial hour humanity makes a wrong choice, the whole race may even be wiped out from the face of the earth as being an evolutionary failure, and Nature may start her experiment on some other planet in some other solar system of which recent scientific research is already giving us glimpses. Man has not yet attained the qualities of the head and heart which alone can give him the fitness and the capacity to make a proper use of the great power which has been put into his hands by Science for preparing the material conditions of a truly spiritual and divine life on the earth. Men are getting inspiration from within to accomplish something great and on a grand scale; but on account of spiritual ignorance, they are unable to ascertain what that great thing is, and blindly impelled by egoism they are rushing into world struggles to conquer and rule over the whole earth. Science has turned the human race into one unit. One country, one nation, one culture—that is really the goal towards which all the endeavour of Nature is tending; within that world union, there will be unimpeded freedom for the individual as well as the group to develop in their own way thus manifesting infinite variety within a grand world symphony. But

the present mind, life and body of man are so weak, ignorant, small, narrow, unregenerate that with these assets he cannot grasp or accept this great ideal of unity in diversity and proceed to realise it in actual life. For this it is necessary to discover the soul, the self, the one divine Reality lying concealed in all human beings behind their outward body, life and mind, to regard these as instruments of the self-expression of that inner Reality and to shape and transform these instruments with its spiritual light and power. Then will man find in this mortal body a divine life, the immortal will be founded in the mortal as the Vedas say; in that truly higher order of life all the conflicts will be ultimately solved and all the desires and aspirations of man will find their utmost fulfilment.

> " A search for a perfected economic society and the democratic cults of the average man are all that the modern mind presents us in this crisis as a light for its solution. Whatever the truth supporting these ideas, this is clearly not enough to meet the need of a humanity which is missioned to evolve beyond itself or, at any rate, if it is to live, must evolve far beyond anything that it at present is. A life-instinct in the race and in the average man himself has felt the inadequacy and has been driving towards a reversal of values and a transfer of life to a new foundation" (*L. D.* 1164)

Education and propaganda, it is supposed, would induce men to give up violence and learn to love each other. But experience shows that education can only give a knowledge of things, it cannot bring about any radical change in nature. Unity, equality, co-operation —all these things are needed for the well-being of society; so attempts are being made to suppress all competition and clash of egoes by a rigorous social organisation. But under such a regime society will turn into a machine, and the individual will not find the needed freedom and scope for its own development, and that is not the way for the solution of the problems of life.

> " The individual is indeed the key of the evolutionary movement; for it is the individual who finds himself, who becomes conscious of the Reality. The movement of the collectivity is a largely subconscious mass movement; it has to formulate and express itself through the individuals to become conscious: its general mass consciousness is always less evolved than the consciousness of its most developed individuals, and it progresses in so far as it accepts their impress or develops what they develop. The individual does not owe his ultimate allegiance either to the State which is a machine or to the community which is a part of life and not the whole of life; his allegiance must be to the Truth, the Self, the Spirit, the Divine which is in him and in all; not to subordinate or lose himself in the mass, but to find and express that truth of being in himself and help the community and humanity in its seeking for its own truth and fullness of being must be his real object of existence." (*L. D.* p. 1154).

A religious movement alone, it is suggested, can save man from the mechanical oppression of a regimented society, at the same time strengthening the social and communal feelings which would ensure an equitable social order. If the religious sense is awakened in man, if man follows the right path following the dictates of religion, each

one keeping to his own right course, *Swadharma*, there can be no conflict between men and men, nations and nations. But experience has amply shown that religion also is defeated by the ignorance and egoism inherent in human nature. The tendency to aggrandise oneself at the expense of others, which is still very strong in man, has exploited religion for its own purpose. Thus though religion may have helped some individuals here and there to grow spiritually, it has not been able to raise society to a higher level. The problem that confronts humanity today cannot be really solved by the usual type of religious, political, social or educational movement—all these human activities have to be taken up into a new integral vision and totally transformed. What is needed is an integral transformation by which divine light, peace, power, love, joy and beauty may be established in human life. In the words of Sri Aurobindo,

> "A total spiritual direction given to the whole of life and the whole nature can alone lift humanity beyond itself."

But what hope is there in the world that we are witnessing today that such an integral spiritual uplift or transformation of human life would be possible in the near future? Even if that be not possible now, there is no other way; for it is idle to hope that human nature will continue essentially to be what it is now and yet a New Order can be ushered in simply by effecting some external changes and re-organisation in the outward modes of life. But the change of human nature that is needed is nothing so impossible or remote, for that which is to be developed is already there within our being—it has not to be acquired or brought from outside or from a distance. The difference between the sleeping state of man and his waking state is very great, but it does not take much time to go from one to the other. What is needed is to awaken to the soul that is within us and to remould our external life and nature with the light and power of that inner Divinity. Nature through her long evolutionary course has been preparing man for this consummation; all the crises that occurred in human history have advanced mankind some distance towards that goal. But the crisis that has now come upon us has no parallel in history, and the realisation that it promises to man also has no parallel. In order to actualise and make it true in life what is required is that a certain number of men and women should have a vision of this change, a realisation of its urgent need, an indomitable faith in its possibility and a firm resolution to fulfil all the conditions necessary for its effectuation. It is not that this tendency has not already appeared in the human race; there is a growing realisation all over the world that there is no deliverance for mankind without spirituality. And once this aspiration becomes fixed and strong in man, Nature's evolutionary effort will be easier and there will inevitably be a response from the Divine Power above.

The attempt to attain spiritual life by organising Asrams and monasteries have been made in the past; but that attempt has been for the individual salvation of world-shunning saints and sannyasis, the aim of that has been other-worldly, and not the bringing down of a new spiritual power on the earth by which this earthly life can be transformed and divinised. Attempt for social uplift has been made by organised

religion and various kinds of idealisms; but the lower egoistic nature of man has again and again frustrated all such attempts at building up of a New Order of human life. No mental idealism or partial spiritual endeavour can overcome altogether the obstacles inherent in human nature. What is needed is the transcendence of this nature altogether, and finding a new mould of life in a supernature. There are no doubt many difficulties in the realisation of such an ideal, but if Nature has become ready for such an evolutionary ascent and the Divine Power descends on the earth for effecting such an uplift, all difficulties and obstacles will be overcome. The unique sadhana of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother has created this sublime possibility.

The objection will be raised that the world has always been what it is now, that the laws of Nature are unsurmountable and that what man has become by Nature cannot be transcended, and he can never be a superman or god; Krishna, Buddha, Christ, Muhammad came, they brought the divine message to humanity, but man continues essentially to be the same as ever. The history of mankind no doubt gives some support to such a view; but if we take a deeper and wider view, we shall find that though some broad principles of Nature remain unchanged and are fundamental, the forms that evolve on the basis of these principles have constantly changed giving rise to ever new forms. Our earth has not always been what it is now; even this vast universe with all its stars and galaxies have not always been there. According to modern Science, that which was at the beginning of creation could not be called a universe or a world—that had no definite form; there were no luminous bodies like the suns and the stars, so there was no light; in that inconceivable, unimaginable darkness, minute particles of electricity were moving about apparently at random. The universe we now see with our earth stirring in a corner, teeming with living beings of which man is the highest, has been the result of a very long process of evolution and change in the course of which many apparently unexpected and abnormal things have happened—things quite out of the usual way of Nature. Giving an outline of evolution leading to the advent of man on the earth, Sir A. S. Eddington writes:

> "Looking back through the long past we picture the beginning of the world—a primeval chaos which time has fashioned into the universe that we know. Its vastness appals the mind; space boundless though not infinite, according to the strange doctrines of science. The world was without form and almost void. But at the earliest stage we can contemplate the void is sparsely broken by tiny electric particles, the germs of the things that are to be; positive and negative they wander aimlessly in solitude, rarely coming near enough to seek or shun one another. They range everywhere so that all space is filled and yet so empty that in comparison the most highly exhausted vacuum on earth is a jostling throng. In the beginning was vastness, solitude and the deepest night. Darkness was upon the face of the deep, for as yet there was no light." (*Science and the Unseen World*)

It is interesting to compare these words of a foremost scientist of the present day with the words uttered by the Vedic Rishis many thousands of

years ago in the famous Hymn of Creation in the Rigveda (X, 129):

"In the beginning Darkness was hidden by darkness, all this was an ocean of inconscience when universal being was concealed by fragmentation." (*L. D.* I—XXV), Dr. Eddington proceeds,

"The years rolled by, million after million."

This is not a strictly correct statement, as there were no years at that time measured by the revolutions of the earth round the Sun. The Vedic language is more accurate,

"Death was not nor immortality nor the knowledge of day and night."

"Slight aggregations," continues Dr. Eddington, "occurring casually in one place and another drew to themselves more and more particles."

Mark the word "casually"; that indicates that here something took place out of the normal way. Thus gravitation slowly parted the primeval chaos and "island universes" were formed. Then these island universes began to rotate, and Science cannot explain how they acquired this rotation. There are so many gaps and missing links in the scientific account of the evolution of the universe. The island universes were subdivided by gravitation and gave birth to star clusters and then to stars.

"And with the stars came light, born of the fiercer turmoil which ensued when the electrical particles were drawn from their solitude into dense throngs."

This appearance of a universe of luminous stars out of the primeval darkness is according to modern science the first step in the universal evolution. Here, so far as Science can say, the work of creation and evolution might have ceased. "For many billions of years the stars may continue to shed their light and heat through the world, feeding on their own matter which disappears bit by bit into aetherial waves." But at one point of time something unusual, exceptional, we may say, miraculous happened and our solar system was produced.

"For what might be called the second day of creation we turn from the general rule to the exceptions. Amid so many myriads there will be a few which by some rare accident have a fate unlike the rest. In the vast expanse of the heavens the traffic is so thin that a star may reasonably count on travelling for the whole of its long life without serious risk of collision. The risk is negligible for any individual star; but ten thousand million stars in our system and more in the systems beyond afford a wide playground for chance. This rare accident must have happened to our Sun—an accident to the Sun, but to us the cause of our being here. A star journeying through space casually overtook the Sun, not indeed colliding with it, but approaching so close as to raise a great tidal wave. By this disturbance jets of matter spurted out of the Sun; being carried round by their angular momentum they did not fall back again but condensed into small globes—the planets." (*Science and the Unseen World.*)

Science thus regards the creation of the solar system as a matter of rare chance, but that is not an explanation, rather a statement of fact that it has so happened. If there were an intelligent creator who wanted to produce a place suitable for the habitation of living and intelligent beings like men in

a material world he would have by a slight interference without disturbing the fundamental laws of matter made the occurrence of such chances and rare incidents possible, and that is what has actually happened not only once but at every critical stage in the wonderful history of the universal manifestation. By the "accident" mentioned above something occurred outside the regular plan of Nature, namely the appearance of lumps of matter small enough and dense enough to be cool. So long as matter remains heaped in immense masses, as we find in the stars, the temperature cannot be less than ten million degrees. By permitting matter to be cool, Nature created a field for the production of strange effects. To the eye of a Scientist Nature appears as a great experimenter who has infinite material and infinite time before her; but that implies an intelligent consciousness behind her which takes delight in infinite variety of creation. There are 92 different kinds of matter in the universe, 92 chemical elements; but how out of uniform tiny electric particles such diversity arose Science cannot say. This finds a rational explanation only in the supposition that the whole universal movement is essentially and ultimately a play of consciousness, and our own limited mental consciousness shows how it delights in imagining and creating diversity in unity. This diversity of matter cannot manifest itself at high temperature and little consequence follows from it; but in the cool planets it asserts itself and produces the wonders studied in chemistry and physics. The second impulse of evolution creating cool planetary globes could have exhausted itself in the formation of inorganic rocks and ores and other materials, as it actually may have happened in other planets. But here again something abnormal and exceptional happened which made possible the appearance of the phenomenon of life. Each of the 92 elements embodies in its structural pattern one of the first 92 integers. Thus "the chemical characteristics of element No. 11 (sodium) arise from the fact that it has the power at low temperatures of gathering round it eleven negative particles; those of No. 12 (magnesium) from its power of gathering 12 particles; and so on." These 92 elements by themselves would have produced a material world of considerable but limited diversity. But the element carbon, embodying the number 6, because of the peculiarity of the number 6, opened up unlimited possibilities.

> "The carbon atoms love to string themselves in long chains such as those which give toughness to a soap-film. Whilst other atoms organise themselves in twos and threes or it may be in tens carbon atoms organise themselves in hundreds and thousands. From this potentiality of carbon to form more and more elaborate structure a third impulse of evolution arises, the creation of life and living beings".

If Nature in her arithmetic had overlooked the number 6, the conditions for the appearance of life would never have been produced and this can hardly be called an accident.

The account of evolution given by physical science cannot go further; but it is sufficient to confirm the view that the world has a plan behind it and its course is being directed by a conscious being and that that course, so far as our world is concerned, is evolutionary; that is, through a long and gradual process

new principles and forms are emerging, keeping intact the basic structure and the fundamental laws. Matter has been the basis on which Life and Mind have appeared; but Life represents a new principle different from Matter, and Mind represents a new principle different from both Matter and Life. Science cannot explain the appearance of these new principles, and the very fact that they are new principles explains why Science sees so many missing links in the evolutionary process of which it sees only the outer aspect. If Matter had been allowed to go on in its own way, life could never have appeared on the face of the earth. Even now we see nowhere living things arising from non-living matter. But the cosmic evolution could not stop there; matter was to be the basis of the manifestation of the infinite in the finite, of the Spirit-in embodied beings, of divine life on the earth. That is why through an evolutionary process which is essentially spiritual life, and consciousness first appearing in plants and animals have found their hitherto highest formulation in man. But the mind of man is not yet the spiritual consciousness, though it approaches it and gives the promise of its own transcendence. So there is nothing irrational or impossible in the view that this transcendence will be made in the further course of the same evolution, this time assisted by the conscious effort of man himself. And there is also nothing in Science or reason which can justify us in saying that that great crisis has not come now. On the other hand, spiritual vision shows that now has come the time for man to take the next higher step in his evolution. Neither Science nor Philosophy has been able to give a thoroughly satisfactory account of all the processes of Nature taken in their integrality. That can be revealed only to an integral spiritual vision and it is such a vision we find embodied in Sri Aurobindo's *The Life Divine* which has not only created a new era in Philosophical thought but in the actualisation of the hidden possibilities of human life.

"Brahman, the ultimate Reality is infinite and eternal and he is "to our spiritual perception a Divine Existence, Consciousness and Delight of being which is a supracosmic Reality, self-existent, but also the secret truth underlying the whole manifestation; for the fundamental truth of Being must necessarily be the fundamental truth of Becoming. All is a manifestation of That; for it dwells even in all that seem to be its opposites and its hidden compulsion on them to disclose it is the cause of evolution, on Inconscience to develop from itself its secret consciousness, on the apparent Non-Being to reveal in itself the occult spiritual existence, on the insensible neutrality of matter to develop a various delight of being which must grow, setting itself free from its minor terms, its contrary dualities of pain and pleasure, into the essential delight of existence, the spiritual Ananda." (*L. D.* 558).

Brahman is infinitely enjoying his own delight manifesting the infinite miracles hidden in his own being. One in being he has become many in becoming in order to taste through the many the delight of love, of embrace, of interchange. As the Upanishad says:

"He desired, 'May I be many', He concentrated in Tapas, by Tapas he created the world; creating, he entered into it; entering he became the existent and the beyond-existence, he became the expressed and

the unexpressed." (*Taittiriya Upanishad* II. 6—*L.D.* II-XXII).

Of the infinite variety of his self-manifestations, one is the gradual evolution of consciousness out of the inconscient. All-conscious, he has hidden himself from himself and descending into self-oblivion has taken the form of inconscient matter, in order to create a basis for the manifestation of his infinite divine consciousness in and through many finite material bodies. The organisation of matter step by step so that life and consciousness may appear in it is the meaning of the terrestrial evolution. At every critical stage of this evolution there has been some intervention from above of which Science, confined as it is only to the evidence of the physical senses, cannot give any account. When Life appeared in matter finding a suitable organisation there for its manifestation, an altogether new principle was created—that is why it appears to Science that some links are missing. In the same manner when mind evolved in living beings, it was also a new phenomenon, a new principle altogether. As a matter of fact, all these principles—and there are others higher and greater—are so many different formulations of the one consciousness. Mind, Life, Matter are phenomenally different from each other, but they are essentially one as they are all manifestations of a force which transcends all and is not limited by any of them. There are different planes in existence, each plane being dominated by one of the principles of creation. Above this material world of ours there is the vital plane and above the vital there is the mental plane, each with its characteristic creations; beyond these is the supramental plane. In this way there has been a graded creation of planes and worlds originating from Sachchidananda Brahman, and a constant action and interaction is going on between these different planes. Our material world is at the bottom and all the higher planes tend to manifest their characteristic powers and riches here under material conditions. Thus Life appeared in matter on the earth through a pressure on it from the Vital plane; afterwards, when the conditions were ready, mind appeared in earthly life through the influence of the Mental plane from above. Now there is coming on earthly life an insistent pressure from the supramental plane, and that will turn man into superman, somewhat in the same way as when animal turned into man. This culmination of man is an evolutionary necessity, a thing destined in the divine plan of creation, and it seems that the moment of that great transcendence has arrived and the tremendous crisis through which the world is passing today is really a part of this great evolutionary crisis. The divine power by which this transformation will be effected will conquer all obstacles and hostile forces and establish the Life Divine on the earth.

When the action of the supramental power begins on the earth, human life even within its own limits of ignorance will find a new harmony. With its full manifestation humanity will be raised to a new status of perfection and fulfilment.

> "Much that is normal to human life would disappear. In the light of gnosis the many mental ideals, constructed principles and systems, conflicting ideals which man has created in all domains of his mind and life, could command no acceptance or reverence; only the truth, if any, which these specious images conceal,

could have a chance of entry as elements of a harmony founded on a much wider basis. It is evident that in a life governed by the gnostic consciousness war with its spirit of antagonism and enmity, its brutality, destruction and ignorant violence, political strife with its perpetual conflict, frequent oppression, dishonesties, turpitudes, selfish interests, its ignorance, ineptitude and muddle could have no ground for existence. The arts and the crafts would exist, not for any inferior mental or vital amusement, entertainment of leisure and relieving excitement or pleasure, but as expressions and means of the truth of the spirit and the beauty and delight of existence. Life and body would be no longer tyrannous masters demanding nine-tenths of existence for their satisfaction, but means and powers for the expression of the spirit. At the same time, since the matter and the body are accepted, the control and the right use of physical things would be a part of the realised life of the spirit in the manifestation in earth-nature." (*L. D.* pp. 1179-80)

" To the normal life-being an existence without the reactions of success and frustration, vital joy and grief, peril and passion, pleasure and pain, the vicissitudes and uncertainties of fate and struggle and battle and endeavour, a joy of novelty and surprise and creation projecting itself into the unknown, might seem to be void of variety and therefore void of vital savour. Any life surpassing these things tends to appear to it as something featureless and empty or cast in the figure of an immutable sameness; the human mind's picture of heaven is the incessant repetition of an eternal monotone. But this is a misconception; for an entry into the gnostic consciousness would be an entry into the infinite. It would be a self-creation bringing out the Infinite infinitely into form of being, and the interest of the Infinite is much greater and multitudinous as well as more imperishably delightful than the interest of the finite. The evolution in the Knowledge would be a more beautiful and glorious manifestation with more vistas ever unfolding themselves and more intensive in all ways than any evolution could be in the Ignorance. The delight of the Spirit is ever new, the forms of beauty it takes innumerable, its godhead ever young and the taste of delight, *rasa*, of the Infinite eternal and inexhaustible. The gnostic manifestation of life would be more full and fruitful and its interest more vivid than the creative interest of the Ignorance; it would be a greater and happier constant miracle." (*The Life Divine*, pp. 1184-85).

Anilbaran Roy.

SRI AUROBINDO'S "THOUGHT THE PARACLETE"

I. INTRODUCTION

A short poem of but twenty-two lines, *Thought the Paraclete* is nevertheless among the most characteristic of Sri Aurobindo's poetic utterances. Along with five other equally typical pieces, it appeared about two years ago; but the poems were apparently composed many years earlier. They are now reprinted in the second volume of Sri Aurobindo's *Collected Poems and Plays* and appear in the section entitled "Transformation and Other Poems."

Thought the Paraclete is a sudden, swift jet of piercing, unconventional melody. One reads and re-reads it, astonished and awed into a rapture; one is puzzled by its currents of thought and play of imagery; one is dazzled and thrilled by its radiation of light and riot of colour; one is chastened at last into an ineffable quietude by its sheer art, its suggestion of both lightning motion and an unearthly peace. There is no doubt at all that the poem embodies a vast and potent revelation!

And yet *Thought the Paraclete* puzzles and intrigues the reader, for, while catching its general drift at once, he is none the less all but floored by its imagery and its colour symbolism. The poem is clearly the expression of an experienced ascent of Thought—Thought that, like a shooting star, spans a vast zone in a blinding fraction of time. But although we can intellectually strive to reproduce the experience in our own minds, it will be but a lifeless facade, a grandiose proxy bloated with mere mental stuff. The experience as such is unfortunately denied to most of us, and hence we pathetically blink in our bewilderment when the poet describes the thrills he has braved, the splendours he has glimpsed, the beatitudes he has been.

It is not suggested here—far from it!—that spiritual experiences should not constitute the subject-matter of poetry. A poet can coin his unique spiritual adventures into imperishable poetry even as he can deftly turn his emotional responses into an elegy or a song or an ode. But spiritual experiences being *per se* ineffable are for that very reason incommunicable through the medium of our everyday vocabulary. And yet spiritual experiences are dear to the heart of man, and he would gladly clutch at the intangible, and capture and retain it (if he could!) as part of himself. That is why we cherish in our heart's tabernacle revelations like Francis Thompson's *The Hound of Heaven* and Sri Aurobindo's *Trance of Waiting* and *Thought the Paraclete*. We love them, we cherish them, we tap them from time to time to draw forth momentary solace, but—do we *understand* them in every particular, do we gauge the plenty in every crevice or sense the significance of every turn of thought and every shade of colour? Let us frankly admit that we do not and that, perhaps, we cannot; at any rate, it is very consoling to be told by Coleridge that poetry should only be generally, and not too perfectly, understood. Even so, let us take courage in both hands and draw closer to *Thought the Paraclete*; and let us venture to scrutinize it with reverent care.

II. FORM AND METRE

Thought the Paraclete is one of several fruitful attempts on Sri Aurobindo's part to give classical quantitative metres agreeable to English habitations and forms. In his long, scholarly and illuminating essay on Quantitative Metre, Sri Aurobindo has generally indicated the broad lines along which the oft-attempted and oft-frustrated endeavour may indeed be carried to a successful conclusion; and most of his recent poems—quite apart from their thought content or spiritual impulsion—are offered as luminous exhibits that amply illustrate and to a very considerable extent justify his prosodical theories.

In *Thought the Paraclete* Sri Aurobindo attempts an interesting variation of the Latin phaleuciakes or hendecasyllabics of Catullus. The metrical scheme of the hendecasyllabic line is given by this notation:

– – | – ∪ ∪ | – ∪ | – ∪ | – ∪ |;

in other words, a spondee starts the line and is followed first by a dactyl and then by three trochees. Sidney, Coleridge, Tennyson and Swinburne are among the famous English poets who have attempted either half-heartedly or in a mood of frivolity, to write English hendecasyllabics. Sidney follows the orthodox scheme in lines like:

Reason, tell me thy Mynde, yf here bee Reason?
In this straunge vyolence to make resistence,
Where sweete Graces erect the stately Banner?

But Sidney is obviously ill at ease,—for instance, "reason" is a spondee at the beginning, but a trochee at the end!

Coleridge's *Catullan Hendecasyllabics*, on the other hand, refuse to scan in the orthodox (or, indeed, in any) fashion. He generally manages to retain the three trochees at the end, but the earlier half of the line is made up usually of two trisyllabic feet, though, once in a way, he does not scruple to begin with a foot even of four syllables:

Shivering with ecstasy sank up on her bosom.

Tennyson is much more orthodox, but then his *Hendecasyllabics* are meant only to produce a comic effect, as in:

Hard, hard, hard is it, only not to tumble,
So fantastical is the dainty metre.
Wherefore slight me not wholly, nor believe me
Too presumptuous, indolent reviewers.

Swinburne's *Hendecasyllabics*, on the other hand, follow merely a trochaic rhythm, with an invariable dactylic substitution for the second foot:

In the month of the long decline of roses
I, beholding the summer dead before me;

and the result is—and this is only too common in Swinburne—a more or less "ineffugable" monotony.

Sri Aurobindo's hendecasyllabics are, however, hendecasyllabics with a difference. He saw clearly that "classical metres cannot always with success be taken over just as they are into the English rhythm; often some modifications are needed to make them more malleable".[1] He accordingly begins as a rule with a trochee; the spondee and the dactyl follow, and are themselves followed by two trochees; and—this is most significant—"the last syllable of the closing trochee is most often dropped altogether".[2] The first two lines

1. *Collected Poems and Plays*, II, p. 305.
2. *Ibid*, II, p. 305.

of *Thought the Paraclete*, scanned according to this scheme, will read as follows:

As ŏsome | brīght ārch | ānĕgel ĭn | vĭsĭon | flĭes
Plŭnged ĭn | drēam-cāught | spĭrĭt ĭm | mĕnsi | tĭes...

The modifications no doubt result in reducing the hendecasyllabic to a decasyllabic line,—but there are also counterbalancing advantages.

The pushing of the dactyl towards the centre gives the line an arching, almost a parabolic movement, immediately suggesting the "ascent" implied in the poem. The weight and volume of sound in the first three feet naturally resolve themselves into a crescendo, a graded ascending scale in tone and pitch. But "ascent" ever involves "descent" as well, and hence the latter half of the line is so contrived by Sri Aurobindo that it shapes itself into a diminuendo and thereby insinuates into our ear this crucial principle underlying his metaphysics.

The elimination of the last syllable of the closing trochee is also important from another point of view. *Thought the Paraclete* is both a structure of thought and a stream of sound; the former consists of spans of thought (or sentences), while the latter is made up of a large number of feet of sound. The shortest of the spans of thought is concreted into the last line of the poem; so too the shortest of the feet of sound is compressed into the clear and hard mould of the monosyllabic fifth foot. And yet the last foot signifies no weakness, no poverty of sound; it is a single, but long, syllable; even exceptions like "being" and "seeing" are but apparently so; the final close of each line thus repeatedly strikes a note of self-sufficiency and strength; it is, as it were, "throned in the luminous vast of illimitable self-vision."[1]

We have now only to write down the notation,

- ŭ | - - | - ŭ ŭ | - ŭ | -;

read it from right to left and anon from left to right, and we can at once perceive that the metre is truly symbolic of the thought-content of the poem, that it visibly indicates the principle of evolution-involution or ascent-descent that is at the core of Sri Aurobindo's metaphysics of the Life Divine. It is said that a single *anustubh* vivifies in itself the *karuna rasa* that *Valmiki Ramayana* so wonderfully evokes in its mighty sweeps and memorable incantations. We may similarly hazard the statement that each of Sri Aurobindo's hendecasyllabics is also a phonetic galvanization of the idea of the ascent of consciousness towards the Supermind and of the descent of the Spirit that at last brings about this great transformation:

Self was left, lone, limitless, nude, immune.

A word may be added about the rhyme-scheme of *Thought the Paraclete*. The twenty-two lines are divided into eleven pairs of rhymes, and the arrangement is as follows:

aa; bcdcdebe; fgfg; hiijjh; kk;

it is as though a rising movement intersects again and again a falling movement, as if the two movements are involved in a prolonged and purposeful embrace. The curious may group the rhymes into four couplets and two quatrains, the remaining rhymes floating in between somewhat elusively; as a matter of fact, excepting for the initial

1. *The Life Divine*, 1, p. 183. (References are to the First Edition.)

and concluding couplets, the rest of the rhymes agreeably play a sort of hide and seek, and the whole poem thus produces in the responsive ear the impression rather of a "winding bout of linked sweetness long drawn out."

We have tried to show here that the form and metre of *Thought the Paraclete* merit and repay a careful study and analysis. As one slowly reads the poem,—as one familiarizes oneself with its half-exotic, but highly seductive and chastening, rhythms,—as one gazes enraptured at its rounded completeness, one realizes at length that Sri Aurobindo has somehow nobly succeeded in giving the hendecasyllabic an English soul and setting. He has succeeded, it would seem, where a Sidney, a Coleridge and a Swinburne had failed; and he has succeeded only because he has all along known, not only the possibilities, but also the peculiar limitations of an attempt to reproduce classical metres in English.

III. THE TITLE OF THE POEM

So much about the form and the metre: we shall now turn to the *title* of the poem—"Thought the Paraclete"! We know—do we really, or do we only think we know?—what "thought" is; we fondly believe sometimes that a certain thought is illuminating, that it germinated in the obscure depths of our consciousness on a particular occasion, even that it is "developing", sprouting forth in many directions. But why does Sri Aurobindo call Thought the Paraclete? What exactly is a Paraclete? And why is Thought *the* Paraclete?

The word "Paraclete" occurs in the *New Testament*[1], where Christ refers to the Holy Ghost as the Paraclete. Mr. C. H. Irwin explains the term thus:

> "It includes the idea of *Comforter* and...*Advocate*. Each of these words must be taken in its fullest sense, so as to include instruction, guidance, strength, and holy elevation of desire and purpose. The word clearly implies the *personality* of the Holy Spirit."[2]

The Jesuit mystic and poet, Gerard Manley Hopkins, attempts in one of his sermons a more vivid explanation of the term:

> "A paraclete is one who comforts, who cheers, who encourages, who persuades, who exhorts, who stirs up, who urges forward, who calls on; what the spur and word of command is to a horse, what clapping of hands is to a speaker, what a trumpet is to the soldier, that a Paraclete is to the soul; *one who calls us on*, that is what it means, a Paraclete is one who calls us on to do good. One sight is before my mind, it is homely but it comes home: you have seen at cricket how, when one of the batsmen at the wicket has made a hit and wants to score a run, the other doubts, hangs back, or is ready to run in again, how eagerly the first will cry—Come on, come on!—a Paraclete is just that, something that cheers the spirit of man, with signals and with cries, all zealous that he should do something and full of assurance that if he will he can, calling him on,

1. *John*, XIV, 16, 26; XV, 26; XVI, 7.
2. *The Universal Bible Commentary*, p. 433.

springing to meet him half way, crying to his ears or to his heart. This way to do God's will, this way to save your soul, come on, come on."[1]

And Hopkins has also tried to show that, although Christ is certainly a Paraclete, only the Holy Ghost is *the* Paraclete.

However, the term 'Paraclete" seems to have occasionally been used in other illuminating contexts also. Thus the *Oxford English Dictionary* gives two extracts, one of which refers to the "victorious hero" as the "true Paraclete," while the other credits Plato with using "in one place the term Paraclete, Intercessor, in speaking of the Reason." If Reason can be called the Paraclete, why, so too can Thought be, —Thought that ever strives to reach up to the meanings of things, ever bravely scales the spiral of Consciousness, ever attempts to achieve a total and intimate compenetration with ultimate Reality!

Thought, then, is a Paraclete, even *the* Paraclete. As Sri Aurobindo points out, Thought "is not the giver of knowledge but the "mediator" between the Inconscient and the Superconscient. It compels the world born from the Inconscient to reach for knowledge other than the instinctively vital or merely empirical; it calls for that superconscient knowledge and prepares the consciousness here to receive it. It raises itself into the higher realms, and even in disappearing into the supramental and Ananda levels is transformed into something that will bring down their powers into the silent Self which its cessation leaves behind it."[2] It is this conception of Thought that is embodied in the term "the Paraclete" and the poem itself may be aptly described as a radiant evocation of the successive stages by which the Paraclete, the celestial automobile, registers its progress and brings the clinging occupant to the long sought sanctuary of Bliss.

Thought, then, is our mediator, our intercessor; we summon it to our aid whenever we tread upon the multitudinous thorns of life; we repose no mean trust in Thought, for we know it can "gently lead us on"; it willingly takes out half-articulate messages to the world of the Superconscience and it also brings to us "airs from heaven" to comfort us or to sting us to further spurts of ascent—onward and onward—to the very gate of the enthroned seat of the Supermind, and even beyond to the ineffable Bliss of Brahman. Dare man gaze at the Sun and his supernal splendours and remain unblinded yet? Dare man leap across the shoreless chasm that divides the worlds of Inconscience and Superconscience, the mental world of division and pain and multiplicity and the other-world of harmony and Ananda and integral unity?

But—astonishing as it may appear—Man dares all and often stakes all because Thought the Paraclete is his guide and his intercessor. Thought is the angel the breath of whose nostrils softens even the heat of the journey, the strength of whose wings—"great glimmering wings of wind"—bridges the distance between the *here* and the *there*, indeed even brings the here and the there together and transforms them into an infinite here and an eternal now.

1. *The Note-Books and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, p. 287.
2. In the course of a letter to a disciple.

However, the stages on the "journey" are to be visualized, not on a space-time basis in terms of a left-to-right or a bottom-to-top progression from one junction or aerodrome of achievement to another and a further and a better, but rather psychologically as movements in consciousness, as successive attempts at a dynamic comprehension of the One in the Many and the Many in the One, as progressive attempts to reduce more and more, and finally to eliminate altogether, the "immense hiatus as seems to exist between Supramental Truth-Consciousness and the Mind in the Ignorance."[1] Man may be in appearance a thing of nought, a muling and a puling creature that is the jest of Nature, subject alas! to the giant evils of death, desire and incapacity: but man refuses to grovel in the groove of his limitations, refuses to gloat over these badges of his misery, but is resolved rather to exceed himself, to possess the Infinite and also to be possessed by the Infinite. He alone holds in the clasp of his hands the clue to the future, his own and the world's!

But the possession of the Infinite is no easy business, "not a happy canter to the goal"[2]; indeed, "the possession of the Infinite cannot come except by an ascent to those supramental planes, nor the knowledge of it except by an inert submission of Mind to the descending messages of the Truth-Conscious Reality."[3] Thought the Paraclete—Thought our winged intercessor, our comrade, our friend, and the resourceful mediator in our dire distress,—Thought the Paraclete can alone facilitate our ascent "to those supramental planes", it alone can prepare us to receive those "descending messages"; Thought the Paraclete is thus verily a Power and a Personality, and we have but to allow ourselves to be carried by him—in the *marjara* fashion—in utter self-surrender and faith,—and all will be well.

IV. THE PHILOSOPHICAL BACKGROUND

Sri Aurobindo wrote several years ago to one of his disciples that *Thought the Paraclete* "does not express any philosophical thought . . . it is simply a perception of a certain movement, that's all." A poem like *Thought the Paraclete* is no doubt no mere foot-note to a philosophical treatise of the dimensions of *The Life Divine*; a poem exists, splendorously and triumphantly, in its own sovereign right,—or it is nothing. And *Thought the Paraclete* is truly poetry first and poetry all the time, poetry that just storms the toppling crags of Reality by direct frontal assault, or, to borrow Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch's metaphor, leaps "from a centre *within* us to a point of the circumference, and seizes it by direct vision." The reader, too, has boldly to leap likewise from a centre *within* him and seize the meaning of *Thought the Paraclete*; for such poetry has to be apprehended, not with the aid of an elaborate critical exegesis, but by direct vision alone.

While thus the true hearer, like the true creator, of poetry is the soul, the soul only, the soul alone, we cannot as yet abolish or wholly ignore the operations of middle terms and muddling

1. *The Life Divine*, I, p. 416.
2. Letter to Dilip.
3. *The Life Divine*, I, p. 248.

instruments like the intellect, the senses, and the imagination. The ear it cannot choose but hear the procession of beautiful sounds, the intellect it cannot choose but depiece the integral framework of the poem, and the imagination it cannot choose but visualize similar experiences in accordance with the laws of its own unique *svabhava* and *svadharma*. These too have their own place—though a strictly subordinate place—in the phenomenon of poetic creation and appreciation. We need not therefore offer a lengthy apology for occasionally yielding, as we do here, to the temptation of talking about and about a poem, instead of leaving it to sink of its own accord deep into one's veiled, stainless, limitless Self. *Thought the Paraclete* is certainly quintessential poetry: but the intellect *would* see in it the base, nay the justification, of a whole system of philosophy. Even so the poem but expresses with a radiant finality the inapprehensible truth that even disconcertingly evades the mere logician's grasp. The poem gives us, not the philosophical justification for the soul's ascent to the Godhead on the wings of thought, but rather brings out in one dazzling wave of rhythmic sound the beauty and the glory and the ecstasy of the fact of ascent and triumph and splendid transformation. However, even the votarist of pure poetry will not scorn an intimacy with the philosophical background of the poem, for not only is it illuminating in itself but it also makes easier the necessary final self-surrender to the poem.

The philosophical spiral of reasoning that underlies *Thought the Paraclete* may be summarised in a few sentences. We may start with the axiom that the evolutionary transition from Mind in the Ignorance to Mind in the Knowledge (or, conversely, the involutionary transition from Mind in the Knowledge to Mind in the Ignorance) is itself marked by various steps or resting places or "slow gradations" on the way. After all, it is a fairly "indeterminate" or "intermediate" zone that we are here considering; the dynamics of the sheer physical universe cannot and do not obtain here; only a few reassuring lamp-posts or light-houses glisten in the dim expanse beyond, and we are left to trace out the graph of our fascinating journey with the sole help of these luminous milestones on the way.

Sri Aurobindo mentions four of these discernible "slow gradations"—Higher mind, Illumined mind, Intuition (or Intuitive mind), and Overmind. Mind starts this particular evolutionary race, Supermind consummates it; and it is *Thought the Paraclete* that makes the consummation easy, natural, and even inevitable.

Further, according to Sri Aurobindo, ultimate Reality includes the two extreme ends of the evolutionary sweep, Matter and Spirit,—not only includes them, and all that lies between them but at the same time also transcends them, being always Itself, the One without a Second, the Absolute beyond all termini, the Truth beyond all truths; "we start, then, with the conception of an omnipresent Reality of which neither the Non-Being at one end nor the Universe at the other are negations that annul; they are rather different states of Reality, obverse and reverse affirmations."[1] The movement of Involution, starting as a deliberate descent

1. *The Life Divine*, I. p. 49.

of Consciousness from Sachchidananda, has reached its bottom, its very bottom, in Matter; the counter-movement of evolution, starting in its turn as an upsurge of Consciousness from Matter, where it is heavily and darkly veiled, has reached the sloping and slippery stage of Mind. One more forward leap is necessary and inevitable,—the leap from Mind to Supermind, touching the four signposts of Higher Mind, Illumined Mind, Intuitive Mind, and Overmind on the way,—and then only would Man be able to fulfil the evolutionary purpose, to exceed himself by outgrowing the limitations of death, desire and incapacity, and partake once and for all in an earthly immortality.

V. THE FOUR MOVEMENTS

At long last we can now tackle the poem itself. The central idea of the poem, which is the transformation in the Self brought about as a result of the ascent of Consciousness to the supramental level, is suggested by the imagery and the music, rather than closely argued out in terms of logical reason. We are expected to proceed from light to light, from one luminous revelation to another, and anon to the next, and so on till we arrive at and are lost in the rich and illimitable calm of the wonderful finale. To facilitate an analysis of the poem, however, let us divide (alas, we ever "murder to dissect";) it into four separate movements or discernible sweeps of thought.

First Movement

The opening five lines constituting the first movement at once achieve an arresting exordium, and at the same time also suggest through a bold and apt simile the perceived ascent of Thought. "As some bright archangel in vision flies...": the words cannot but suggest to the reader the Holy Ghost, *the* paraclete according to Christ; as the Holy Ghost, or the archangel Gabriel or some other bright archangel, plunges headlong into "dream-caught spirit immensities" to meet and redeem the pilgrimaging soul, so "flew my thought." Man, the mental and vital being, has been stung to activity by the "pure touch of the spiritual force"[1]; he has now outgrown sheer instinctive reaction to circumstances and he is no more dazzled by the brilliant systems and delectable castles constructed by empirical knowledge and the mere intelligence; he is now a wanderer in the realms of the invisible, he is indeed, for the time being, groping about himself being "self-lost in the vasts of God." The reference to "green" and "orange" need not puzzle us, the contrast implied being quite natural, both materially and metaphorically. Andrew Marvell too juxtaposes the two colours to suggest a telling contrast:

> "*orange* bright
> Like golden lamps in a *green* night."[2]

The transition from a purely vital consciousness to a mental one is as noticeable as the shift from "green" to "orange"; but Thought rises higher still in the scale, seeking other colours in the spectrum of its steep ascent.

Second Movement

The next ten lines constitute the second movement:

1. *The Life Divine*, II, p. 976.
2. *Bermudas*.

Sleepless wide great glimmering wings of wind
Bore the gold-red seeking of feet that trod
Space and Time's mute vanishing ends. The face
Lustred, pale-blue-lined of the hippogriff,
Eremite, sole, daring the bourneless ways,
Over world-bare summits of timeless being
Gleamed; the deep twilights of the world-abyss
Failed below. Sun-realms of supernal seeing,
Crimson-white mooned oceans of pauseless bliss
Drew its vague heart-yearning with voices sweet.

Thought has managed to grope its way to the stair of ascension and has reached the rung of the Higher Mind, "a mind no longer of mingled light and obscurity or half-light,but a large clarity of the spirit...a luminous thought-mind, a mind of spirit-born conceptual knowledge."[1] Seeing the One behind the Many, the Higher Mind strives, at any rate conceptually, to get beyond the categories of space and time; and now its prime thirst is to achieve "a mass ideation, a system or totality of truth-seeing at a single view."[2] The term "wings of wind" suggests the living instrument of spiritual Consciousness; "gold-red" is, according to Sri Aurobindo, "the colour of the supramental in the physical", or, as he sings in *Flame-Wind*:

Gold in the mind and the life-flame's red
Make of the heavens a splendour, the earth a blaze...[3]

But conceptual knowledge, however comprehensive, is not enough; it lacks warmth and motion and even spiritual sustenance. Thought therefore cannot rest for ever on the rung of the Higher Mind but must forge further ahead; as it reaches the level of the Illumined Mind, unity is seen, not alone as a concept, but even as a living reality; but it is only an intermittent vision that Thought glimpses at this stage. Even then the experience gives a lustre to the face of the mystic seer, so that in him "the soul lives in vision and in a direct sense and experience."[4] By now Thought the Paraclete has brought the thinker and the seer to the threshold of the Intuitive Mind; Thought is the winged hippogriff[5], "pale-blue-lined"[6]; he is the all-seeing, all-daring hermit, truly the Pilgrim of Eternity; he is veritably the sole monarch of his visioned realms. As it touches the intuitive level, Thought acquires the four-fold potencies of truth-seeing, truth-hearing, truth-seizing and truth-correlation[7] and "it brings its own greater radiant movement into the will, into the feelings and emotions, the life-impulses, the action of sense and sensation, the very workings of the body consciousness.....A certain integration can thus take place."[8] Meanwhile there is an obscuration or ignoration of the seeming dichotomies and disharmonies of the world:

the deep twilights of the world-abyss
Failed below.

1. *The Life Divine*, II, pp. 985–6.
2. *The Life Divine*, II, p. 987.
3. *Collected Poems and Plays*, II, p. 364.
4. *The Life Divine*, II, p. 996
5. The hippogriff is a "fabulous griffin-like creature with body of horse." (*The Concise Oxford Dictionary*). Milton refers to the "wing" of the hippogriff; and hence Thought may be compared to the hippogriff, since both are "winged".
6. According to Sri Aurobindo, "'pale-blue' is the colour of the higher ranges of mind up to Intuition". (Letter to disciple).
7. *The Life Divine*, II, p. 1000.
8. *The Life Divine*, II, p. 1001.

The harmony from above would seem to have calmed the troubled waters below, so that it is clear that the descent of the higher consciousness has taken place concurrently with the ascent of the lower one.

The next movement in the ascent reaches up to the Overmind, and now "Thought, 'for the most part, no longer seems to originate individually in the body or the person but manifests from above or comes in upon the cosmic mind-waves: all inner individual sight or intelligence of things is now a revelation or illumination of what is seen or comprehended, but the source of the revelation is not in one's separate self but in the universal knowledge; the feelings, emotions, sensations are similarly felt as waves from the same cosmic immensity breaking upon the subtle and the gross body and responded to in kind by the individual centre of the universality; for the body is only a small support or even less, a point of relation, for the action of a vast cosmic instrumentation."[1] Thought has reached "sun-realms of supernal seeing"[2]; it is now a powerful organizer who conceives and executes many "crimson-white[3] mooned oceans of pauseless bliss" and it is a "magician craftsman empowered to weave the multicoloured warp and woof of manifestation of a single entity in a complex universe."[4]

And yet Thought at the overmental level is mightily restless and knows not the peace of utter fulfilment and self-knowledge; its "vague"—"vague" because it is still not in possession of the finality and self-luminosity of supramental knowledge—its "vague heart-yearning" no doubt sings songs of a multitudinous variety and also translates them into reality, but even such Thought is only "a power of the lower hemisphere; although its basis is a cosmic unity, its action is an action of division and interaction, an action taking its stand on the play of the multiplicity."[5] Overmind cannot obviously be the final resting place of the questing soul of Man.

Third Movement

The third movement describes the final leap, the triumphant landing on the summit of the Supermind. Although the overmental consciousness "is the highest possible status-dynamis of the spirit in the spiritual-mind plane"[6], thought refuses to rest on its oars, but

Hungering, large-souled to surprise the unconned
Secrets white-fire-veiled of the last Beyond,
Crossing power-swept silences rapture-stunned,
Climbing high far ethers eternal-sunned,
Thought the great-winged wanderer paraclete
Disappeared slow-singing a flame-word rune.

Or, as Sri Aurobindo writes elsewhere: "The soul would .... cross its original line of departure from the supreme knowledge: it would enter into the integrality of the supramental gnosis."[7] A description of this final "canter to the goal" is truly beyond the resources of logical reasoning or verbal portrai-

1. *The Life Divine*, II, pp. 1002—3.
2. *cf.* "Wisdom supernal looks down on me, Knowledge mind cannot measure;
Light that no vision can render garments the silence with splendour."
(*Collected Poems and Plays*, II, p. 363.)
3. "Crimson-white" is the reflection of the Supramental Light.
4. *The Life Divine*, I, p. 431.
5. *The Life Divine*, II, p. 1006.
6. *The Life Divine*, II, p. 1006.
7. *The Life Divine*, II, p. 1009.

ture. Thought the Paraclete would seem to have learned the last secret of all, the "flame-word rune"[1], and "slow-singing" this *mantra* of total emancipation and transfiguration, it disappears into the "last Beyond". The concluding lines of *The Bird of Fire* offer a striking parallel to the third movement in *Thought the Paraclete*:

> One strange leap of thy mystic stress breaking the barriers of mind and life, arrives at its luminous term thy flight;
> Invading the secret clasp of the Silence and crimson Fire thou frontest eyes in a timeless Face.[2]

Fourth Movement

The last line, in and by itself, is the fourth and concluding movement of thought and spray of revelation:

> Self was left, lone, limitless, nude, immune.

The ascent has summoned the corresponding descent; the ego is dead, the self is bare of all the sheaths of the ignorance, it is for ever immune from death, desire, and incapacity, it is the ONE in very truth, it is the heir to Infinity, Eternity and Immortality.

VI. CONCLUSION

The four movements in *Thought the Paraclete* are but integral parts of a logical and poetical whole. The choice of words and images, the patterning of metre and rhyme, the associations of colour and sound, the careful organization of the four movements, the adequacy and beauty of the structural design, all make *Thought the Paraclete* a profound revelation and a perfect poem.

After a minute study of *Thought the Paraclete*, one is inclined to exclaim with Appayya Dikshita:

> इत्थम् विचित्राः सर्वत्र
> भावास्सन्ति पदे पदे।
> कवितार्किकसिंहस्य
> काव्येषु ललितेष्वपि॥[3]

K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar.

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1. According to Sri Aurobindo, the "flame-word rune" is "the Word of the Higher Inspiration, Intuition, Revelation, which is the highest attainment of Thought." (Letter to a disciple.)
2. *Collected Poems and Plays*, II, p. 280.
3. Commentary on Sri Venkatanatha's *Yadavabhyudaya*, Canto I, Verse 9.

THE DIVINE MOTHER

The conception of God as the Mother is a distinctive feature of Hinduism. In Christianity we have the notion of God as the Father, and Islam lays emphasis upon the nature of God as the Master, the Obeyed One (Allah), though Islam is also aware of the unique and indescribable character of the proper relation subsisting between man and God. The mystics, the world over, realise God as the companion, as the supreme Beloved, and finally, as the inmost Self or the Soul of soul. Hinduism is alive to the many-sided nature of the relationship under consideration. In His transcendental aspect or poise of being, God is above all relations and distinctions, above all names and forms and qualities; He is self-sufficient and eternally self-realised. But in His relationship to the world and man, God is at once Master or Sovereign, Father, Mother, Companion, Beloved and Bridegroom. Man enters into these different relations with the Divine at the different stages of his spiritual unfoldment. The deepest realisation is however attained when the individual self knows itself to be essentially identical with or inseparable from the supreme Godhead.

The Spirit has at every poise of being two inseparable aspects, the aspect of immutable being and the aspect of mutable becoming, the static and the dynamic aspects. In the static aspect, God is self-absorbed or wrapped up in His eternal perfection, without any want to remove or any desire to fulfil. In the dynamic aspect, God moves out of his immutable being into ceaseless becoming and takes delight in the variable manifestation of the inexhaustible riches of His nature. It is this dynamic Divine who is represented as the Divine Mother and who is responsible for the functions of creation and destruction. While the Supreme in its aspect of immutable being is called Siva, in its aspect of mutable becoming we call it Sakti or the Mother. The ecstatic dance of the Mother Kali on the bosom of the quiescent Siva is the symbolic representation of the rhythmic movement of the cosmic drama against the background or on the basis of the eternally perfect Absolute.

In every system of philosophy, there is a feminine principle in some form or other. This feminine principle is no other than the principle of objectivity (*Idam*) which brings forth the cosmic manifold for the delight of the Spirit; it is the principle of creativity (*sakti*) which is inexhaustible in its production of diverse forms and qualities. In the Sankhya system we have this feminine principle in Prakriti which is an objective and creative principle but which is existentially separate from the Spirit. In Advaitism, Maya stands for the feminine principle, but Maya is logically indeterminate and incapable of being characterised as either existent or non-existent. In Western philosophy, we have the feminine principle in external Nature which is characterised by endless fecundity and dynamic objectivity. Reduced to philosophic terms, external Nature is, at bottom, Non-Being or Formless Matter; it is "passage of events" or "creative advance of Nature"; it is the space-time continuum which functions as the matrix of all empirical existence and the nurse of all becoming. But none

of these principles can be exalted to the rank of Mother, because neither Prakriti, nor Maya, nor Matter nor Space-Time-Continuum is conceived as a spiritual or conscious principle. Sri Aurobindo holds, in consonance with the teaching of the original Upanishads and the Gita, and in consonance with Saivism, Saktism and Vaishnavism that the objective and creative factor is neither unconscious nor ontologically separate from the supreme Spirit; it is rather the dynamic aspect or the superconscient creative power of Sachchidānanda himself. Apparently unconscious external Nature (Aparā Prakriti) is only a lower form of expression of the higher nature (Parā Prakriti) of the Supreme. The higher nature of the Supreme is the self-realising power of infinite consciousness and infinite delight and is therefore most appropriately called the Divine Mother.

The dynamic factor or the creative principle is called Mother because she consciously brings forth the cosmic manifold in implicit obedience to the Will-to-self-manifestation on the part of the supreme Godhead. She mediates between the Above and the Below, between the Supreme and the world of manifestation; but she mediates between them not only in respect of descent but also in respect of ascent. It is through her creative and executive power that the world is brought forth into actualisation. And it is through her infinite grace that man can be re-born into the vastness of the Truth-consciousness and that the whole of Nature can steadily move towards an integral liberation.

Almost in every system of spiritual discipline, the Grace of God is accounted indispensable for man to attain liberation, because liberation means passing over into an indescribable order of experience and a unique dimension of being. It is only natural that the unaided efforts of man should be considered inadequate for the purposes of lifting the veil of ignorance which has enveloped his whole life. But in Sri Aurobindo's sādhanā, the Grace of the Divine Mother has a still deeper significance. The ideal which Sri Aurobindo sets before us is not simply the ideal of self-realisation, but the ideal of self-manifestation; it is not merely the ideal of individual emancipation but the lofty ideal of collective transformation, *i.e.*, the flowering of the Divine in collective humanity. What the integral Yoga aims at is not just a collective escape from the lower world of triplicity (Matter, Life and Mind) but a divine transformation of the lower world for a fuller divine manifestation within it; it aims at the evolution of Man into Superman. Now, three things are essentially necessary for this consummation to be achieved. First, the spiritual aspirant must transcend even the highest centre of his embodied existence (the centre which is called the sahasrāra in yogic parlance) and effect what Sri Aurobindo has called an "overhead ascension." He must perform the miracle of rising above himself so that he may obtain an integral realisation of the Supreme on the supra-mental level. Neither the integral realisation of Sachchidānanda nor the radical transformation of a man's entire being is possible without this rising above oneself or this overhead ascension. But this miracle can be performed only through the Grace of the Divine Mother and not by any amount of herculean efforts on the part of the sādhaka. A heroic sādhaka may rely

upon his own *tapasyā* for realising Sachchidānanda on the plane of the intellect or the spiritualised mind; but integral or supramental realisation is simply impossible without Grace from above.

The second essential requirement of integral yoga is that the yogin should not only rise up to the supramental Gnosis but should also come down to the physical consciousness and establish the supramental Truth-consciousness as a permanant ingredient therein. The supermind should not only be realised but also made overtly operative in our terrestrial life. This presupposes dynamic self-identification with the Divine will, with the manifestation of which the Divine Mother is particularly concerned. For those who prefer static realisation of the Spirit, the Mother is only a means on the way. But the integral Yogin aims at offering himself as a plastic instrument in the hands of the Mother. The integral Yogin does not place liberation, *moksha* or *nirvāna* above everything else; having attained liberation or self-perfection, he puts it unhesitatingly at the disposal of the Mother so that Her purpose may be fulfilled in Life, or, in other words, in order that human living may blossom forth into Supermanhood. His sādhanā is, in truth, from start to finish, the Mother's sādhanā within him. If he wants self-liberation and self-perfection, that is only because the Mother requires his perfected nature as an instrument to work with.

The third essential requirement of integral yoga is that the downward gravitational pull of the lower nature should be completely neutralised and a thorough supramental transformation effected of every part of embodied existence. Not only the mental and the vital, but also the gross physical should be converted into channels of divine activity on earth, into vehicles of divine manifestation and into perfect images of divine purity and splendour. For this, the sādhaka's self-opening and self-surrender should be unconditional, unreserved and integral. The Divine Mother should be allowed to work without let or hindrance in every part of being and flood the entire vehicle with the sovereign light and power of the supermind.

At the present crisis of human civilisation, all those who will unconditionally surrender to the Divine Mother will consciously and effectively assist in opening a unique chapter in the history of cosmic evolution. Sri Aurobindo looks upon the present war as the travail of a new creation, the creation of the conditions for the Superman to be born out of man. The hostile and anti-divine forces are seeking to obstruct the new light and the higher force of consciousness, but their defeat is an absolute certainty. Let all those who aspire after a higher life disabuse themselves of all personal bias and prepossession, turn to the new light that is seeking manifestation into the world, and offer themselves without reserve into the hands of the Divine Mother.

Haridas Chaudhuri.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

"Questions and Answers" is a form as old perhaps as human awakening to knowledge and even today it has not outgrown its utility.

[It is immaterial to ask who is the questioner, for even though the immediate person might be a certain individual, ultimately it is the unenlightened, eternal seeker in man, the ignorant human mind, that questions. And it is the illumined Teacher that answers. Questions are conditioned by the questioner, his mentality and his need, and the answers are relative to him and his condition, *i.e.*, they cannot be absolute and final.] —*A. B. Purani.*

Q. Some maintain that strength (bala) is necessary for attaining to spiritual realisation. Others hold that Divine Grace alone can save man. Perhaps the Vaishnava cult is responsible for popularising the idea of Divine Grace.

A. It is not true. Even as early as the Upanishada we find:—

नायमात्मा बलहीनेन लभ्यः "This Self is not to be attained by the weak" and in Katha we have, **यमेवैष वृणुते तेन लभ्यस्तस्यैष आत्मा विवृणुते तनुं स्वाम्॥** (2,23.)

"This understanding is not to be gained by reasoning, nor by Tapasya, nor by much learning. He whom this Self chooses, to him it reveals its own body." So, here you have the affirmation of both: strength and grace. Besides all religions more or less accept the idea of Divine Grace.

Q. But does it not seem contradictory to affirm the need of Spiritual Strength and of Divine Grace?

A. In spiritual life such contradictions are bound to rise because the laws which govern that life are not subject to rigid human standards. It means that strength is one side of Adhikar or spiritual qualification: strength has a value for realisation But it is not all.

Q. From the point of view of spiritual strength does not grace seem to be an admission of weakness?

Besides it looks so unjust, too. It is a very comfortable doctrine for the idle. You have to sit quiet,—no Tapasya, no labour, no need for self-control—just to wait for the Divine Grace to come down and do the miracle!

A. It is not so. It has to be emphasised that spiritual life and experiences have a knack of reconciling what seems to the mind irreconcilable. Grace is not an admission of weakness because it does not contradict strength and weakness does not invite it necessarily. There is no injustice or partiality involved in grace which is only a fact of spiritual experience.

Q. Can one then say that Divine Grace works unconditionally?

A. Divine Grace is unconditional, but from the point of view of man there are conditions to be fulfilled in order that the Grace may be effective. If some one is all the time pouring something unconditionally into a cup and if the man was continually spilling it out how can the cup be filled?

Q. So, if the man is not receptive the Grace cannot act?

A. It can act to make him receptive.

Q. Would it then be correct to say that Tapasya and Grace are complimentary to each other?

A. That may do as a rule of the golden mean.

Q. It is said that the Grace of the Divine or of the Guru mean the same thing to the disciple.

A. Yes, because the Guru represents the Divine so it is said **गुरुकृपा हि केवलम्**।

Q. I have heard that the life of Girish Chandra Ghosh, the famous Bengali dramatist, underwent a great transformation by the grace of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa.

A. Such a change in the life of a man can take place even by the mere contact, or the spiritual influence of the Guru. In a sense, it can be said that even the acceptance of the disciple by the Guru is an act of grace. But I believe after Sri Ramakrishna's death Girish Chandra used to lament that he had not benefited spiritually to the fullest extent by Sri Ramakrishna's contact, guidance and grace.

Q. How can that be?

A. Girish Babu in his sober moments used to feel very keenly his own shortcomings that stood in the way of his spiritual advance. It is true Sri Ramakrishna used to shower his grace on him and tell him "Leave all your burden to me." But after Sri Ramakrishna left the body Girish Babu used to say "He told me to leave all my burden to him but I was unable to leave it!"

Q. That raises the question whether a man may do no Tapasya and yet attain to spiritual realisation if he has a living faith in the saving Grace of his Guru.

A. Such faith is rare and difficult. But if it is there it can work.

Q. What is the place of Tapasya then?

A. What do you mean by Tapasya? The popular idea is that it is mortification of the flesh, fasting, sitting on nails, standing on the head etc. Tapasya seems to require one to do things which generally one does not like to do.

Q. That seems to be the ordinary idea.

A. But it is not correct. Tapasya is not merely physical and it can include doing things which one likes or wants. Tapasya means gathering of force of consciousness on a particular point or for a particular purpose.

Q. Can all efforts to achieve something—even to satisfy desires—be called Tapasya?

A. The end to be achieved should be higher than mere gratification of desires because in that case though the Tapasya is there it is turned downwards or you can say it is negative. Such Tapasya tends to affirm one in the ignorance and so does not deserve the name of Tapasya. The Asuras used to perform such Tapasya to gratify their inordinate ambition or their ego.

But apart from spiritual aim even in ordinary achievements some kind of Tapasya seems necessary. In art, in scientific investigation if one wants to do outstanding work one requires to do some Tapasya, *i.e.*, to gather up

all the energies of his consciousness for the purpose.

Q. In certain cases very little spiritual effort gives remarkable results and in others there seems no effort at all. So the results are not proportional to the efforts, can it be said to be due to Grace ?

A. It is not a question of quantitative correspondence between the effort and the result. In the action of Grace there are no calculations. Or if you will, only qualitative aspect has some value. Some central part of the aspirant wants the result sincerely and we may say that the Grace finds it possible to act at the moment.

From the point of view of the aspirant the important thing is that something in him should sincerely want the result.

Q. So, personal effort is a contributory factor in the operation of Grace ?

A. It depends upon where you are looking from. From the point of view of the aspirant he should continue his efforts ceaselessly with a firm faith that the Grace would not fail to come at the proper time.

But the Grace does not work or is not compelled to work because there is personal effort. Otherwise it would not be Grace.

Q. Does not all personal effort produce a feeling of strain and even of unpleasantness ?

A. It may do so if the effort is vehement and egoistic. But all effort need not produce those reactions. If a man likes cricket or music he finds it not only easy but even pleasant to concentrate upon it.

Q. That is because one is interested.

A. Yes, hence, that in which one is interested does not generally produce a feeling of strain—unless of course one overworks. It may even give joy. You have the classical example of the Gopis—the milkmaids who had not to make an effort to remember Sri Krishna because they loved him. It is said in the Upanishads that God created the world by Tapas. It was not that He found it difficult or tiring to create the world but that the world was created out of His energies gathered up for the purpose.

Q. But I want to understand a little more clearly the working of the Divine Grace. Can it be affirmed that the man who is ordinarily regarded unworthy of spiritual realisation can or may come to it by an act of Divine Grace ?

A. Certainly, he may. That is to say a man who according to human standards of wisdom, strength, morality is unfit (who is without learning, without apparent strength of will or character) can suddenly attain to a spiritual realisation.

Q. How can one attain to a great spiritual realisation without some fitness ? It is difficult to understand!

A. There may be no outward merit or fitness, but there may be inward merit or fitness which is visible to the Lord, but not to men. In spite of the outer coverings something in the depth of the being may be ready—or may be getting ready—who knows ?

Q. I was thinking of the Gopis. It is said that they heard the flute of Sri Krishna and were enchanted and the Divine Grace saved them. At least

they had the merit of hearing the flute;—that may be the qualification.

A. Or you may say some part in their being was ready to hear the flute even before the flute began!

Q. Then nobody can depend upon the Grace as it seems very uncertain in its working.

A. On the contrary, nobody need despair, however fruitless his efforts, as the Grace can intervene at any time and crown his efforts with success.

Q. Can one depend upon or count upon the Divine Grace?

A. One can count upon it in the sense of an assured expectancy full of faith in the Divine. But one cannot demand Grace as a matter of right or privilege. Then it would not be Grace.

If Grace brings undeserved or apparently undeserved fruits it should confirm one in the faith in its coming at its own proper time. In the meantime one should continue one's efforts patiently with the faith in the coming of the Grace.

Q. I have heard that when Grace comes all the difficulties of sadhana disappear in a minute as if by a miracle. Such was the case of Swami Vivekananda whose difficulties disappeared by Sri Ramakrishna's Grace.

A. If you mean that the Grace can remove some central obstacle or knot of difficulty and that the sadhana afterwards may become more sure and secure, it may be true. But one cannot say that *all* difficulties would disappear, as a rule, by the action of the Grace.

In Swami Vivekananda's case, for instance, the central difficulty of doubt was removed but a long sadhana was necessary and I believe the process continued to the very end.

Q. Even the removal of the central difficulty seems inexplicable.

A. If something in the being of the aspirant—some part of his being, makes a quick and decisive surrender to the Divine then the fundamental difficulty can be removed—there is nothing inexplicable in that.

Q. Perhaps Grace comes easily to those who are like the baby-cat, entirely dependent upon the Divine, because they seem to be constitutionally capable of such quick and decisive surrender. To those who are self-reliant perhaps the Grace does not come.

A. No. It comes also to the baby-monkey type, those who are more self-reliant. Such men also get the Grace—but it counts on their efforts. Only, in their case the decisive touch of Grace may take a long time to come.

Q. Then, can it be affirmed that the Grace works for all?

A. Yes, all can have the Divine Grace except those who wilfully turn it away, who cut themselves away from the path, or those who revolt against or betray the Divine. In all these cases man separates himself from his own inmost soul—his psychic being.

Q. If Grace is so general can we not say that it is the universal divine compassion acting impartially, and that there is nothing special about it. In other words the Grace of the Divine is universal and the human being has only got to receive it.

A. No, Grace that is spoken of here is not the universal divine compassion which is quite another thing. This Grace is a special phenomenon which acts directly or through the instrumentality of the Guru or holy men.

When it is said all can have the Grace it means everybody has his chance, the potentiality of getting the Grace.

This Divine Grace does not work, is not compelled to work according to human ideas. It acts at times in disregard of normal standards and morals, as in the case of Jagai and Madhai, two highway-men or in that of Bilwamangala, the rake and St. Augustine, the profligate who were all changed by the touch of Grace. It may equally come to the virtuous. There is no mental rule or universal law about the action of Grace. And yet one can say that it does not seem to work without discrimination. Only that discrimination is *not* mental or human.

Q. From the way the Grace is explained I think it is the only path to the highest Truth.

A. That again is not true. There are a thousand paths to the Truth and Grace is one of them. We call it Grace because it seems to be the Spirit or the Infinite being that determines the action from above independently of mental causes *i.e.*, it decides its own movement.

Q. Can we say, for instance, that the Divine Grace is equivalent to the self choosing the hour and the manner to manifest itself; or that. it is the sudden flowering of the inner being—the soul—into self-realisation and the self-knowledge?

A. All the three,—the Divine Grace, the self making the choice of the time and the manner and the soul outflowering—mean about the same thing I believe.

One must rely on the Divine and yet do some enabling sadhana—the Divine gives the fruit not by the measure of the sadhana but by the measure of the soul and its aspiration.

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If one is not prepared for labour and *tapasya*, control of the mind and vital, one cannot demand big spiritual gains —for the mind and vital will always find tricks and excuses for prolonging their own reign, imposing their likes and dislikes and staying off the day when they will have to become obedient instruments and open channels of the soul and spirit. Grace may sometimes bring undeserved or apparently undeserved fruits, but one cannot demand Grace as a right and privilege—for then it would not be Grace. One cannot claim that one has only to shout and the answer must come. Besides, I have always seen that there has been really a long unobserved preparation before the Grace intervenes and, even after it has intervened, one has still to put in a good deal of work to keep and develop what one has got—as it is in all other things—until there is the complete Siddhi. Then of course labour finishes and one is in assured possession. So *tapasya* of one kind or another is not avoidable.

—*Sri Aurobindo.*

INDIA IS ONE

(REGIONAL AND RACIAL)

It is the creative individual more than the collectivity that produces what is called culture. The artist, the poet, the philosopher or even the scientist has each of them his own world where, away from everything around him, he lives absorbed in the pursuit of what to him is true, good or beautiful. It is true that the growth of social consciousness in man out of his primitive herd-instinct was essential to his progress as a civilised and communal being, but it is also true that there would have been no culture if man the individual had not developed that power of mind in him by which he becomes the creator of all those splendid things that make the fabric of his civilisation. The community was always there, evolving from clans and tribes into the race, then into nation, as determined by social and geographical conditions, but for its growth in culture and refinement the community, whatever its external form, has always and very largely to depend on, and draw its sustenance from, the mental activity of its creative personalities. History testifies that even collective life, when smaller in form, is easily able to develop an individual character and thereby prove more fruitful than bigger ones. The city states of old Hellas and the small kingdoms of ancient India may be appropriate instances. What is indispensable to the enrichment of culture is complete freedom for the individual so that he may give full play to his inner faculties and create what turns out to be the expression of the soul of the nation to which he belongs.

Modern civilisation with all its defects has certainly many values that will count in the future evolution of humanity. It is the product of an age of individualism, as all civilisations in their origins more or less are. But its vastness and the increasing potencies of Nature released by it which are proving beyond the power of man to properly manipulate are responsible for many of the problems with which he is faced today. Unity is one such problem which has its roots deep in the complexity that characterises every aspect of modern life which is dominated by the scaffolding erected by organised bodies for the maintenance of order and discipline in them. And man finds himself forced into that artificial machinery which is called the State. But his problems, much less the problem of unity, cannot be solved by any power that the state can exercise. A mechanical unity enforced from without can be no permanent solution. Unity is a thing of the heart, and to be real and lasting it must come from within. Besides, there are many things that must be done before a satisfactory solution of the problem will be possible. The distress that envelopes the world today caused largely by mutual distrust does no doubt make unity the most insistent need of the hour. And forces against it notwithstanding, there are favourable ones too that are helping to

clear the way for man to come closer to others and to avail himself of the opportunities of mutual understanding that are increasing every day. Science has widened the horizon of human knowledge. It has annihilated distance, multiplied facilities of social and cultural intercourse and brought about uniform changes in the common life of humanity, with the result that an outlook of international fellowship envisaging the ultimate ideal of human unity is slowly emerging in the mind of man, and an effort on his part is also visible to give a practical shape to it. The prospects however are not very bright for this great ideal, particularly for its ultimate end, to become a reality in the near future, but when once Nature has held it before humanity, some day or other but sooner than later, it will be fulfilled in the life of the race.

An English writer feels inclined to believe that everything in the life of modern man is tending to the supreme truth that mankind is one. Spiritually it is so true, although at the present moment it may seem a little too optimistic. Nevertheless, indications are there that 'the mind of man is opening to an unprecedented largeness of vision of the essential oneness of life, of the wonder and mystery of the spirit in him and the universe'. It is this inward and intuitive understanding of the deeper meaning of things through which man will awaken into the truth of a higher consciousness in which alone can a real and permanent unity be founded. The evils that divide humanity everywhere, that stifled all possibilities of human mutuality will be starved to extinction only when man would realise his intrinsic unity in the realm of the spirit, the kingdom of God. A new harmony is therefore to be discovered on which to build the new order of the future.

It is not that unity is a recent ideal or that it never existed in any form. As a matter of fact Nature provides one of the most potent forces that bring it about. The lure of fertile land was the cause of the earliest corporate life of man. The first human unification was effected by *Place* from which has developed the idea of a common homeland and therethrough, with the march of time, a common nationality. It is the bounties of nature that attracted groups of humanity to settle in river-valleys and organise collective existence by taking to agriculture, and gradually to other arts of life that laid the foundation of human civilisation. The idea was mooted in England a few years ago that land projection might be adopted as an effective method of inculcating love of country and of rousing the interest of young people in their own homeland. Indeed, an intimate acquaintance, which visual knowledge so impressively gives, with the topography including every detail of the flora and fauna of the land where we are born does surely inspire us to ardent feelings of affinity with it. There is joy in seeing before us projected on the screen the beauties of our land of birth, its mountains and plains, rivers and seas, forests and cities, its temples and monuments, its peoples, its animals and its vast variety of Nature's lavishnesses and all these against the background of its geographical unity. There is no doubt that "among all the circumstances that go to create that heritage which is to be the opportunity of a people, there is none so determining, so welding, so shaping in its influence, as the factor of the land to which our children shall be native. Spiritu-

ally man is the son of God, but materially he is a nursling of Earth. Not without reason do we call ourselves children of the soil." A geographical unit becomes thus in course of time the centre of a nation unit. It is to a large extent true that a race too, especially in its origin, is the creation of a place which is nurtured by Nature into a geographical distictness. In the chemistry of human intermingling which began with the migrations of the races, the original types were lost and new ethnic forms evolved out of the process of admixture which unceasingly is going on in the common life of humanity in more and more subtle ways through the dynamic of social intercourse. It is therefore the land more than the race origins which binds man to it and becomes his common object of adoration. The land where we are born is one of the supreme organic powers in the moulding of our destiny, the destiny of the nation. " Those who having a common region of birth, connect the work, the institution, the ideals, and the purposes of their lives with the region and with their fellows, and those who, doing this, undergo a common economic experience, form a nation, with the duties, the responsibilities, and faculties of a nation."

The land is thus the basis on which the growth of a collectivity and also of its culture and institutions depends so much. If the many races that may happen to people it fail for any reason to realise their unity and solidarity, if even their religions and languages are unable to foster it among them—though religion in India, called the *Sanatana Dharma*, the universal religion, has throughout the ages been a synthetic factor in the community life of the people—the geographical projection of the country might help its diverse human elements to grow into a sense of their unity, founded in the most vivid fact of their being born in and mothered by a common homeland. The Land of India is endowed by Providence with such distinctive features that a plan like this might prove itself effective and produce the desired result. This ancient land has its own meaning and character, its own glory and grandeur, its own rights and liberties, its own interest and importance. Its unity is determined by its definite frontiers, the Himalayas in the north, the Hindukush in the north-west, the seas on the east and the west. And this unity has developed into an integrity that has stamped itself indelibly on the mind and heart of the people, whose love of the land of their birth, when projected in the right perspective, cannot fail to cement bonds of fellowship among them in spite of their external differences. It is a kind of love which is a sacrament, a worship, which no language can properly explain. It grows from within not merely as a patriotic impulse but as a religious predilection. And its sanctity is given its objective expression in the feelings of wonder and admiration that the people spontaneously cherish for the snow tops of the Himalayas, the rugged hills of the frontiers, the valley of Kashmir, the great rivers of India, the Downs of the Deccan, the limpid blue of the seas. In the beautiful words of Sri Aurobindo, " The feeling of almost physical delight in the touch of the mother-soil, of the winds that blow from Indian seas, of the rivers that stream from Indian hills, in the hearing of Indian speech, music, poetry, in the familiar sights, sounds, habits, dress, manners of our Indian life, this is the physical root of that love."

It is through this appreciation of the romance India outwardly is that we begin to feel within us a kind of inner relationship not only with her material embodiment but also with her soul; and as this feeling deepens the mere external fact vanishes, and there emerges before our mind's eye, no less vividly, an idea, a dynamic concept of which the land becomes a symbol, an image, an object, as it were, of our love and veneration. Nothing indeed can more unfailingly develop in us an abiding sense of our fellowship with others, with all, belonging to a common land of birth than when we are blessed with this exalting experience. And does not this sense invariably prove real enough as a wholesome and strengthening lever in our collective life? In fact, it is the very bedrock of it. The physical loses itself in the ideal, and the ideal fulfils itself in the real, reconciling the apparent contradictions into a harmony, a oneness that is built out of the manyness of our country's human and physical appearance. It is a force, an energy inherent in its soil and pervading its space, that works this transforming miracle. India is that Force, that Spirit which makes its mystic appeal to the inmost being of her children. Sri Aurobindo once said that India has never been to him what is merely suggested by her outer vestures, attractive and gorgeous though they are. She is to him the Mother, the eternal and infinite Mother, the compassionate Mother of man. The truth of India is revealed to those who respond to this appeal and thereby know the secret, the supreme secret of her motherhood. To this vision of the Mother does the land of India call her children, whatever their caste, creed or race.

It is interesting to trace the evidences so far available as to how this ideology of the oneness of land, all the more defined by its incomparable greatness and magnificence, became a cohesive force in the evolution of India's culture, whose unity—the land playing its role in it also—is so unmistakably articulate in her art, literature, religion and in all her splendid institutions that came into being as a result of her millenniums of creative striving. The landmass that is called India has always been regarded as one with the human mass that inhabits it, this fusion being effected in the consciousness of the people through its inherent spiritual outlook to which everything is a manifestation of the Spirit. If the Indian sees God in him, he sees him also in others and even in the phenomenal universe around him. No wonder therefore that the land in which he is born should acquire in his conception, an inward character, a profound significance, compelling his highest love and admiration. But the land-mass of India is not an isolated formation. It is a part, however sharply separated, of a vaster region with which, inspired by the self-same ideal, it has always in the past kept up intimate friendly relations. Besides being bound with her sister countries in Asia by a common love of mysticism and spiritual pursuits, India has had from very early times deep and extensive cultural intercourse with nearly all of them. The influence of the pre-Buddhist India on various parts of Asia and Europe apart, the Buddhist communities in pre-Christian Asia Minor and the Indian missionaries in China and Japan in the early days of their history represent two extremities of that vast tract of land which together with most of the south-west Asia and the Island of the Indian

Archipelago does even today bear witness to the immensity of their indebtedness to India for much of what forms the texture of their religious and cultural life. Nevertheless, if India is a living embodiment of the Spirit, Asia is no less so: and India from that standpoint is an organic part of it. Though a soul by herself, she in her heart is one with Asia, her physical setting. And it is not for nothing that she is called the heart of the Orient. In the words of Okakura Kakuzo, "Asia is one. The Himalayas divide, only to accentuate, two mighty civilisations, the Chinese with its communism of Confucius, and the Indian with its individualism of the Vedas. But not even the snowy barriers can interrupt for one moment the broad expanse of love for the Infinite and Universal, which is the common thought-inheritence of every Asiatic race, enabling them to produce all the great religions of the world, and distinguishing them from the maritime peoples of the Mediterranean and the Baltic, who love to dwell on the Particular, and to search out the means, not the end, of life."

India, this great country of ours, stands with the parent continent as her grand background. Provided with natural protection she has lived through the ages to fulfil the mission assigned to her by the Dispenser of her destiny. Vanished are the splendours that went by the names of Egypt, Babylon and Greece! The empires that flourished in Europe exist today only in the records of history. But from time immemorial India carries on not in isolation, as the charge is unjustly made against her, but in love and friendship with her neighbours, and with everyone who comes to her, be he a foreigner or even an enemy. Yet she has a personality all her own, an individuality, that marks her out as something that has no equal in the annals of the earth. The geological movement leading to the creation of land in which early human civilisation began in India was the retreat westward of the extensive Eur-Asiatic Ocean called the *Tethys* giving rise to the plains of northern India through a process of fotmation which must have taken ages. The fertility of this region is due to many factors among which may be mentioned the life-giving waters of a river-system that was formed by the linear depressions which remained after the large-scale geological movement was over. The deposits washed down from the northern highlands added no less to the richness of the soil. On these plains, along the banks of the Indus right down eastward along the banks of the Ganges streams of humanity flowed in unison with the waters, as it were, and spread out into the interiors till the scene was complete with the drama of the early human migration in India. The geographical unity of India is indisputable, in spite of the bewildering variety of her physical features; and equally so is the integral entity of the one body of her vast humanity. The uniqueness of her culture is ascribed by some writers to this unity as well as to her natural separation from the rest of the world. It is the conviction of the Hindus that there is an inner meaning behind her physical formation as also a spiritual purpose of her existence as a conscious manifestation of the supreme Shakti. The vision, not once but many times in her history, has come to the fathers of the race that India is verily the Mother who has stood through the ages entrusted with the task of 'preserving the Knowledge that preserves the world

till Krishna comes back to repossess the Kingdom that is his.' To the Hindus the mother and motherland are greater than heaven itself. Whatever it is, it is clear enough that this vast country, almost a continent, is one in the fundamental principle of its peculiar singularity, built up by the movements racial, social and cultural that have been taking place in India from times prehistoric.

It is not even two decades when the view was held that the story of human culture in India began with the Indo-Aryans. But the excavations in Mohenjo-daro and Harappa have not only pushed back the date by more than a millennium but revealed evidences of a civilisation superior to many then existing in the world. It is of course the valley of the Indus which was the scene of this great event proving the remarkable antiquity of Indian culture and the glorious role India played in the history of human civilisation. The inhabitants who peopled those prosperous cities represent four different ethnic types. It seems racial intermingling began in India even in those days when peoples of various stocks, whether original settlers or emigrants from outside, shared a common land as their home and built a civilisation that was then and is even now a marvel of human creation. The gates of India from west to east were always open; the routes by the sea were so easy; and the inland rivers were navigable. All these offered inroads for human emigration into India from days unknown to history. The physical types that constitute the present population of India are evolved from the three principal ethnic types through the continuous process of racial intermingling. The foreign elements absorbed by her are broadly distinguished as Greek, Iranian, Mongolinian, Scythian, Hun, Semitic and some even of what constitute the modern European. All these elements India has assimilated to her being and along with her own children given them the stamp of a common nationality. Was it not the force of land that effected this miracle of human unification? And are not always associated with India the beauty that she is, her inexhaustible resources, and a culture that in the past was her greatest contribution to the happiness and progress of mankind? "This admixture of races", says C. E. M. Joad, "has had important effects on India's past history and present outlook. The first of these is a sense of fundamental unity far more vivid and persistent than can be accounted for by the circumstance of propinquity in the same geographical area. Europeans live together in a geographical area whose size is not very different from that of India. But as the wars which have disgraced European history in the past and the quarrels and rivalries that enfeeble the League of Nations in the present only too clearly show, the inhabitants of Europe are very far from being imbued with the sense of unity which distinguishes the inhabitants of India. We cannot, in short, speak of a "European" with the same appropriateness as we can speak "an Indian", who, in spite of differences of colour, caste and creed, looks upon all other Indians as his fellow-countrymen and upon India as his home."

Sisirkumar Mitra.

THE INTEGRAL YOGA OF SRI AUROBINDO

I. THE INTEGRAL YOGIN

A dynamic message rose from the battle-field of Kurukshetra, fifty centuries ago: "Be a Yogi; live in Yoga with the Divine; act in the Divine Consciousness," That was the message of Sri Krishna to the progressive humanity, through the medium of the heroic Arjuna. Through the thick maze of headlong Time, the word YOGA was struggling for a perfect expression. Its voice was almost drowned by the hell-cries of the battling vital movements. Here and there some ascetics added attributes to it according to individual predilictions, and sought through Yoga to still or kill the mind in featureless trance. Books were written on Yogas; but Yoga was still a mystery or monopoly or a thing dreaded by family men. Humanity was still groping. through the blind alleys of ignorance without knowing the saving virtue of Yoga.

A soothing harmony of hope and bliss sweeps through the groans of the war-torn world;

"*Live in Yoga with the Divine, a Life Divine!*"

This is the message of Sri Aurobindo, the modern Superman, the Yogin of an integral vision of existence. If the word Yoga is popular today, the credit is due to Sri Aurobindo; for it was he who saved the word for humanity as a *mantra* of the living harmony of LIFE. It was he who explained to us the integral sense of Yoga as a means of gaining God in the Spirit without losing the reality of actual life in the world. The word and its full virtue was actually re-discovered by him. It was he who came like an Oedipus to solve the riddle of Existence.

He was the prophet of Indian Nationalism. Singular among all the prophets of nationalism, Sri Aurobindo sought victory through God-Force which is the bed-rock of Indian civilisation. Even amidst the political tornado of those days, his inspired genius distinctly spoke out:

"The new movement is essentially a spiritual movement. Its key-note is the essential unity of God and Man. The divinity of man is its highest gospel. To evolve God out of man is its highest aim. It seeks to bring the Kingdom of Heaven on earth."

God's voice, His help, His Power, His Will in humanity and His Manifestation through the human instrumentality—this is what he sought even during the Bandemataram days. He felt that Yoga alone can give that God-Force, the Divine Energy indispensable for the collective existence of man in the freedom of the inner Spirit. He was a born Yogi, and his early life was a progressive evolution of the Siddha in him. Long before his name came to the limelight of public recognition, Sri Aurobindo began to practise Yoga. Initially he got some hints from the Gita, the Upanishads and one or two reliable Yogins. All the hints he got, he made his own and followed the *Inner Guru* who kindled the latent Fire ablaze and steeped him in serene meditation. Day by day he felt the Divine touch and lived in His Consciousness. He made an utter surrender of His ego-personality to the Cosmic Lord of existence and followed His voice and lead. He put his whole conscious being into contact with the Divine through

peaceful inner communion. His devotion was not of the emotional sing-and dance type of the previous Bhaktas. It was the Shānta-Bhāva, the sublime peace-attitude, of the Vedic Seers:

"Even as I am appointed by Thee, O Lord seated in my heart, so I act," This was the key to his inner sādhana. Such was his faith and surrender. Perfectly equal to all, in all happenings, never yearning for any individual gift, always calling fervently for the Divine Will to be done in him, Sri Aurobindo made his life a rhythm of dynamic activity in yoga with the Divine. Whatever he thought, wrote, spoke or did was a natural outflowering of his God-Consciousness. He was not governed by the judgments of men but he always obeyed the unseen Power which moved him from within. He lived from *within* out. The purity of his life and the divinity of his voice drew the highest respect and adoration from the heart of his countrymen. When the entire man was submitted to the immaculate sovereignty of the Divine Will, when the inner instrument was clean and pure as a ready channel of Grace, when the heart was soaked in Divine love and the head steeped in meditation, when the nature was in constant communion with the Supreme, then He revealed His omnipresence and possessed the chosen instrument. The great aspiration of Sri Aurobindo to see the Divine within and without was fulfilled one day, during his one year's meditation in the Alipore jail:

"His strength entered into me, and I was able to do the sadhana of the Gīta, to do work for Him without the demand for fruit. He made me realise the central truth of the Hindu Religion. His strength entered into me. It was Vasudeva that surrounded me. I felt the arm of Sri Krishna around me."

(Uttarpara Speech)

"Rare is that great soul who has realised the omnipresence of the Divine" says the Gīta and Sri Aurobindo came out of Alipore with such a realization. He poured out his inspired message through the columns of the *Dharma* and the *Karmayogin* showing the country how to live and act in the Gīta-spirit. After two months of concentrated tapasya at Chandernagore, the Divine Will safely brought him to Pondicherry, the chosen centre of his spiritual work. After four years of silence, we heard his voice again. The *Arya* revealed to us the Superman in Sri Aurobindo. It is the Gospel of Integral Yoga replete with the Spirit's highest promises and eloquent with divine optimism. *The Essays on The Gīta*, The *Synthesis of Yoga* and the *Life Divine* are the three works of deep spiritual vision that can be called the Gospel of Sri Aurobindo, the Integral Yogin. The Arya stopped in 1921.

Sri Aurobindo retired into inner silence and solitude, to explore still further into the higher planes of Truth-Conscious-Bliss and to bring down even like Bhagiratha, the Supramental Force that alone can transform and divinise human life. Life is divinised and integralised through the Yoga of living in conscious surrender to the Divine.

"The Integral Yoga is that which having found the Transcendent, can turn upon the universe and possess it."

Let us make a study of the Integral Yoga and its varied effects on all the aspects of human life.

Shuddhananda Bharati.

REVIEWS

Rabīndra-Kāvye-trayī - parikalpanā (Bengali). By Sj. Sarasilal Sarkar. To be had of Viswabharati Granthalaya, 2, College Square, Calcutta, Re. 1.

Already a crop of literature has grown up in Bengali on Rabindranath and more are coming. Bengal, in all departments of her life, owes a deep debt of gratitude to Rabindranath and most of this literature is more in way of homage than serious criticism. There is a remarkable tendency to regard Rabindranath as a seer, a prophet, as Gurudev. He never made such a claim, himself; again and again he has said, "I am not a Sadhaka, I am a poet", and we can take him at his word. Rabindranath as a poet has great visions, even spiritual visions, but to be a prophet, a spiritual guide of humanity, one must give a clear message, a conception about the goal of existence and of human life and a practical path of realisation. So far as his poetry is concerned, we find no such conception, or clear guidance. As a man he might have had a philosophy; in his later age he tried to systemise it and the result was his lectures on the Religion of Man. But all this is a construction of his mind; his poetry, on the other hand, came from a deeper part of his being and spoke altogether in another voice. The book under review has tried to sound the depths from which the poems of Rabindranath have arisen, and so far it is on the right track as poetical criticism; but the method that it follows, that of psycho-analysis, cannot, in our opinion, lead to anything really deep and penetrating. It is something like an attempt to read the mysteries of the heavenly bodies with the help of a toy telescope. The science of psycho-analysis, if it be a science at all, is still in a very crude stage; Indian Yogic Psychology went far beyond it. "The new psychology," says Sri Aurobindo, "looks to me very much like children learning some summary and not very adequate alphabet, exulting in putting their a-b-c-d of the subconscient and the mysterious underground superego together and imagining that their first book of obscure beginnings (c-a-t cat, t-r-e-e tree) is the very heart of the real knowledge." (*Bases of Yoga*, p. 227.)

Mr. Sarkar, following his psycho-analytical method, observes that the great peculiarity of Rabindranath's poems is the expression of the infinite through the finite and that for this purpose he has used a symbolism which has its origin deep in his subconscience. But such symbolism is the characteristic of all poetry, and indeed of all art, and there is nothing in it peculiar to Rabindranath. Reviewing a book, 'The Heritage of Symbolism' by C. M. Bowra, Mr. Edward Sackville West observes: "In one sense all art must be symbolic, for if it does not suggest the universal through the particular it simply bears witness to so much undigested experience." The peculiarity in Rabindranath's poems which Mr. Sarkar observes and on which he has based his whole thesis is that in many of them there is a regular sequence of rhythm (*tāl*), music (*gān*) and movement (*gati*). To illustrate this he has cited numerous passages from the poems of Rabindranath.

Light dances, O friend,
light dances near my soul.
Light sings, O friend,
light sings in the lyre of my heart.
The sky is awakening,
the wind rushes.

Here, in the first line dancing implies rhythm, in the second line there is reference to music, in the third to motion. Another instance,

Behind him rain is dropping,
And there is the rumbling sound
of thunder,

Through the openings in the clouds
the rays of the rising sun fall on
his face.

But the true aim of poetry, as of all true art is the "interpretation of hidden truths with the help of images." It is through the delights of the senses that the poet expresses himself, and in all poetry we shall have abundant reference to music as also to other sensuous perceptions; and if we search in other poets, we shall certainly find many passages in which there is this sequence of rhythm, music and movement which Mr. Sarkar regards as peculiar to Rabindranath. Here we can cite some instances taken at random:

Like winds or waters were her
ways:
They heed not immemorial cries:
They move to their high destinies.
A. E.

There is rhythm in every line of poetry, and if we find a line which refers to some sort of sound followed by another indicating some movement Mr. Sarkar's requirements are fulfilled. Here is another instance:

O grey wild sea,
Thou hast a message, thunderer,
for me.
Their huge wide backs
Thy monstrous billows raise.
—Sri Aurobindo.

So that most of Tagore's poems may come within his scheme, Mr. Sarkar has indefinitely widened the significance of his terms. Thus blooming of flowers is music to him, and also the falling of leaves. So a bunch of flowers may represent rhythm, tears may represent movement. Even with all this freedom of interpretation, if anywhere in Tagore's poems the sequence cannot be discovered, the explanation is to be found in psycho-analysis which says that in the subconscience things change from one form into another. Our only comment is that with this formula, all the poetry in the world can be brought under Mr. Sarkar's triple conception.

Even if it be a fact that the sequence of *tāl, gān* and *gati,* as conceived by Mr. Sarkar, is more frequent in Rabindranath than in other poets, it would be only an idyosyncracy without any deep significance. But psycho-analysis has revealed to Mr. Sarkar such a significance. He refers to the super-ego of Rabindranath which acts in his subconscience and composes his poetry; as a matter of fact every poet feels that there is something other than and higher than his ordinary self which creates his poetry; but that something is higher and not lower than our ordinary consciousness, and the subconscience of the psychoanalysts is a nether region in us which has not even so much light as our ordinary consciousness has; that can never be the true creator of any genuine poetry or art. According to psycho-analysis, the super-ego is nothing but our reverence for our parents in our childhood formed into a higher self in us in our subconscience. And here Mr. Sarkar has unearthed all the mystery of Rabindranath's poetry. In his childhood, he heard from his venerable father the Upanishadic mantra, *sāntam, sivam, advaitam.* This sank deep into his nature and has manifested in all his poetry in the triple conception, *tāl, gān* and *gati.* Mr. Sarkar has taken some pains to explain how *santam* represents *tāl, sivam* represents *gān* and *advaitam* represents *gati. Sāntam* is the immutable who by its immobility regulates all the movements in the universe, so it is keeping the rhythm, the *tāl*; the songs of the poet bring assurance to the timid hearts of men, so they are *sivam*; and all motion leads ultimately to infinity, to *Advaitam.*

The book is instructive as an illustration how psycho-analysis can help us in unravelling the mysteries of poetic creation. The style of Mr. Sarkar is delightful and the get up of the book is excellent. A. B.

Sex and Spirituality by Pro. P. Narasimham, M.A. M.E.S. (Retd.) (published by B. Kutumba Rao, Bapatla) 1943. Aug.

It was D. H. Lawrence's studies in psycho-analysis of the Freudian type that made him write a series of novels on what should be the true type of relation between the two sexes. 'The call of the blood', which is but another way of stating 'the call of the unconscious libido', is according to him a call for fulfilment, and no true marriage can be which does not take into account this primitive call. This is the general thesis in his '*Sons and lovers*' and "*Lady Chatterley's Lover*". Aldous Huxley develops this same idea rather cynically in his '*Point Counter Point*'. But this flesh or sex business, whatever vogue it had, died down and the glamour of the Freudian psychology passed away. The metaphysical theory of the Call of the Partner has not been sketched by any one so far despite the vast array of tāntric literature, and it is to the credit of Prof. P. Narasimham to have written a brief essay on the metaphysical basis of the male-female relationship. He points out that whatever might have been the nature of the Absolute as a dark Possibility or a Grand Neuter, the moment creation or evolution started, it bifurcated into Father-Mother duality whose inseparableness has been accepted in the figures of Ardhanāriśwara, Śri-Nivāsa (Vishnu), Brahmā with Sarasvati. Indeed this really reveals that the male-female combination cannot be a taboo; to taboo it, as the sanyāsins do, is false and wrong, and the true manner would be to sublimate the concept of relationship between the male and female and not seek abolition of it by reducing men and women to the level of neuters. The acosmic view is a mistake that we may have to rectify. As the macrocosm so the microcosm. The individual soul is a diunity, a two-in-one even like god. It is male and female not in its own nature; but according to the learned professor, it too splits into two, and one of them is the male-part and the other female-part. Their union will result in the fulfilment of the *līlā* or creation. Our realization of Brahman will entail as a first step the discovery of our 'other'; and united together the Divine may be realized. Man must discover his śakti, the female half of himself which he has somehow lost. It is not the kundalinī-śakti of the Yoga, but the actual *dampati*, who is his companion and strength on his spiritual journey "The fully evolved *muktha* is male-female or rather the (male) *purusha* principle who has united within himself his own *prakrithi-sakthi* and thus has become a whole" (p. 13). This he considers to be 'the *fulfilled* spiritual manhood, the original abstract dual nature now become established as a *single* fact' (ibid). He quotes the views of Plato[1], the Myth of Adam and Eve, and the actual practice of the Tantra-sādhana in one of its variants which makes the actual *prathishta* of the śakti in a kumāri etc., as ways and means of achieving the unity that is now unfulfilled. The saving feature however is Prof. Narasimham finds the extra-marital adventure for the partner is not the truth of the path he propounds.

Now this view is clearly an attempt to resolve the deadlock in spiritual life and an attempt so far as it goes to remove the obliquity to which the sexual differentiations have fallen. Admittedly the first phase of our attractions to our fellows is via sex; these become companionable and the attraction of sex is but the superficial but nonetheless fundamental surface-manifestation of the unity-influence; this does give us some sense of completeness not merely for the creative activity of the race nor merely even as an instrument of the creator. It is indeed an important question whether the tantra-sādhanas which inculcate the śakti and śiva union, in the organism of the individual,

1. Plato's view on the Divinity of the soul is that there is a rational part and an irrational part: the view that the male is half a person is not clear.

really do not show that the individual is a microcosmic field of the Divine diunity, rather than that the individual jiva itself is split up into two, one half of the jiva as male seeking out its female other, like D. H. Lawrence's lovers seeking out under the Italian skies their females or *vice versa*. On the other hand the sexual creativity is a creativity under the conditions of darkness or ignorance; and the male and female congregate or unity as such has not the importance that is given to them. Granting that the female-male unity is on a par with the unity typified by the supreme Siva as ardhanāri, as the unity of male-female, it may be asked whether the creation of progeny is the fundamental activity and to become the *parent* is the supreme destiny (vide p. 11 "One who is not *consciously* able to be the parent, both as *father and mother* cannot be a Mukta in the true sense of the term"). On the contrary the mukta is a conduit, a channel, an instrument, a śakti of the Sachchidānanda, and cannot be considered to be a parent both as father and mother. Nor is it clear again that it is imperative for the individual soul to be considered to be a half of some other jiva, and their union is the beginning of the parenthood. The jivas become capable of true creativity and splendid ecstacies in their union with Brahman or Divine and not in their transactions however intimate with other souls, male or female. Some thinkers hold that so far as the female is considered, it is her business to link herself up with her mated male, and the *sādhana* of union is achieved through the male with the Divine. This explanation may be quite a happy solution of the problem of social *pātivratya*, but not of the spiritual sādhana of divine knowledge. The father and mother typify the archetypal nature of Knowledge and Power; together and alone they are *daya*; their creativity is of freedom and they do not limit each other. This is the exquisite meaning of *dāmpatya* as distinguished from mere *pati-patnī-bhāva*. The relationship between the individual souls and God is stated to be the realization, rather than the attainment of similar form of the Brahman as in His eternal diunity. If this were the case, then, the individual soul will be actually so, on the principle 'as in the macrocosm so in the microcosm'. Further the entire argument of Prof. Narasimham rests on an *a priori* deduction from the myth or symbolic forms of the Gods of Hinduism in their later revival. This theory further if stressed may lead to hermophrodism in the soul itself. This latter is more plausible as a theory, for the individual soul is an amśa of the Divine, dependent on the Divine, and lives and grows and exists for the Divine so to speak as an emanation of His and in so far as it creates in its infinite freedom under the sovereign freedom of the Divine it might well be considered to be a mother. But even the best of theologies could not make the individuals create or emanate other souls, or make other souls, emanate of themselves. The whole theory rests on the slender thread of mythology which might rest on the principle of diunity of Siva-Sakti, which is true in its own domain, whose pale reflections, if at all, may be repeated in the individual relationships between the male and female, in *Grihasthadharma*. It is true that without this theory of individual or microcosmic pairing towards unity as the first step in the spiritual ascent there can yet subsist the relationship of male-female without the *libido* thrown in. The sublimation of sex happens not when the pairing takes place in order to create progeny, or to fulfil or rather complete their fragmentariness, but when the individual personality, male or female, meets its partner in the terrestrial scheme from the point of the Supermind which is universal, creative, bliss, truth, power, and it is this supermind in its dark functioning in the Ignorance or lower Nature pairs off or separates the purushaic and the prakritaic factors inherent in its own supreme sentience and works out the evolution of its own supreme multiplicity in terms of diverse centres or personalities. The rebirth theory does not say

that the female will be female in all her journey till she meets her partner, or that the male has been male from the beginning of the split of its integral individuality. On the contrary, each individual in his evolution is being prepared to complete the understanding of the very nature of the processes of creativity and passive recipience and understanding by a thorough contact with these planes established by the Divine Supermind itself, till in its most luminous moment it offers itself or surrenders its entire being to the Supermind in all its Motherhood and Fatherhood, Creativity and Power, Intelligence and luminous lights, so that the individual verily becomes a vehicle of the Divine force and power, and as a field of the Divine, a woman rather than a male. This is the view normally taken up by the mystics whether of the Bhāgavata Alvār type or the Christian school of St. Thomas Aquinas, not to speak of the women mystics. The primal male is God and all the souls are only females. Further according to Sri Aurobindo, sex and sleep are the two fundamental instincts which are difficult to overcome, but which must be overcome in the Spiritual ascent; the reason is not far to seek, the one is a negation of the Consciousness eternally aware, and the other is a negation of the total surrender that has to be made for the ascent of the soul and the descent of the Divine; and further the energy of sex is transmutable into the spiritual energy of light (*ojas sakti*). I shall briefly refer to certain other objections against this first-look theory. The individual soul is indivisible. To think of part–whole relationship is contrary to the integral unity of the individual soul. The male-female are not the portions of the soul in Vedanta whatever be the validity of such a relation in Judaism. Nor can it be held that the irrational is the female and the rational the male, for there is a superrational which is the truth of being. The existence of several personalities in each individual embodied being such as the material or physical, vital, mental etc., is capable of being accepted without this type of split into male-female. Each of these is capable of autonomy within limits so far as they go without entailing actual dissociation in the individual as such. This thesis was put forward on psycho-analytical lines by Aldous Huxley in his very informative Essay on *Pascal*. It is also accepted by Sri Aurobindo, though these are ultimately integrated in the Supermind alone for no true integration of these several personalities which have come into being in Ignorance can be synthesised by the Unconscious or the conscious but only by the Supermind. Thus it follows that no ontological unity or spiritual unity can be affirmed and no real happiness can issue through a mating of these complexes called personalities, supposing we find them disintegrating or 'emanating' from the unity. The relation between the Supreme Divine and the Shakti is not something that leaves the other halved or made into a half-personality. Sakti is the manifest intelligence, the dynamic supermind of the Divine Transcendent; unmanifest she yet is of Him in Him. The emanational theory is applicable only to the Divine whose personalities are all divine, full and integral gods or divinities, who are all purna, infinites, not needing any other to complete their fullness or wholeness. Nor is the thesis that man is of the image of the Divine His maker tenable or on all fours. Firstly the supreme Being is the One, the Unity of the many and the many are not each one of them the One in the many and so on *ad infinitum*. The split-theory or the parallel with the structure of the Neutron will not avail. On this analogy it may well be that all neutrons do not have only one electron but many excepting the hydrogen atom, the monogamist amongst the neutrons. Thus the story of Prof. P. Narasimham will mean that there is not only one sakti or sexually polar opposite but many such.

This being so, the theory put forth by Prof. P. Narasimham appears to have more than the normal amount of objections, though to be sure he has presented the thesis very attractively.

It is a dangerous theory too, notwithstanding certain amount of support he might have from the writings of Marie Corelli, and the novels '*Master of the 3rd Degree*' and *Dweller in Two planets*.' The thesis reveals that his analogies, the logic, the mystic experience and even the image theory reveal serious lacunæ in the presentation of this solution for the problem of Sex and Spirituality.

K. C. V.

THE PHŒNIX

Our illustration on the cover represents the mythological bird Phœnix. This is what the New Standard Dictionary says about it:—

A sacred bird like an eagle, with red and golden plumage, which came out of Arabia every 500 years to Heliopolis, where it burned itself on the altar and rose again from its ashes young and beautiful; hence an emblem of immortality and of the resurrection.

The myth has several forms of which the above is a popular one. The Phœnix period, or the time of re-appearance of the Phœnix, is variously given from 250 to 7000 years. The prototype of the Phœnix is probably the bennu, or symbol of the rising sun, of which the hieroglyph is a heron.

THE BIRD OF FIRE

O marvel bird with the burning wings of light and the
unbarred lids that look beyond all space,

One strange leap of thy mystic stress breaking the barriers
of mind and life, arrives at its luminous term thy flight;

Invading the secret clasp of the Silence and crimson Fire
thou frontest eyes in a timeless Face.

—*Sri Aurobindo.*

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